

JAZZ GUITAR

sight-reading

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Bio

Guitarist/composer Adam Levy is a native of Los Angeles, where he attended the Dick Grove School of Music and studied with Ted Greene. He spent the early 1990s making a name for himself in San Francisco, teaching at the Blue Bear School of Music and performing with some of the Bay Area’s most interesting groups. This ultimately led to touring and performing with Tracy Chapman, who featured Levy on her Grammy Award-winning song “Give Me One Reason.” Respected as a teacher as well as a performer, Levy is a regular faculty member at the National Guitar Summer Workshop and has contributed several instructional articles to *Guitar Player* Magazine. He presently lives in New York City.

Introduction

The purpose of this book is to provide jazz-oriented sight-reading material for guitarists at an intermediate level. The exercises are written using common jazz-style phrases and are intended to be played with a “jazz” or “swing” feel.

The music is presented in four sections. The first section is a series of blues etudes intended to help you familiarize yourself with different positions on the guitar. The second section consists of jazz rhythm studies. The third section is a series of etudes in the style of famous jazz tunes, such as *All the Things You Are* and *Stella by Starlight*. The final section is a series of duets; some are in the style of popular jazz standards and some are my own original compositions.

I hope you enjoy the music. Many books on the subject of reading are full of black dots, but don’t have much to offer in the way of real music. It was my goal in writing this book to provide students with music that is fun to play, as well as challenging.

One final note: our goal in sight-reading is to be able to play a piece of music with little or no preparation. If you make mistakes, try playing at a slower tempo, but do not stop in the middle to practice a difficult passage. Finish playing the piece. Our motto is “forward ever, backward

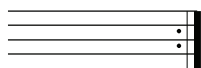
Best of luck.

Cover photos: Jeff Oshiro

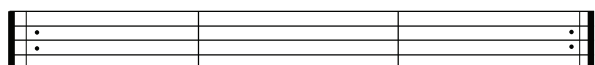


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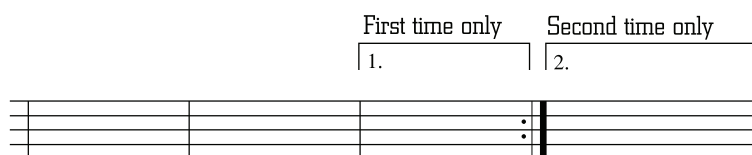
Musical Symbols used in this book.



Go back to the beginning and play again.



Go back to the repeat sign and play again.



Play 1st ending first time, repeat to the beginning, then skip 1st ending and play 2nd ending.

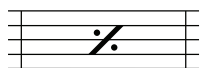
D. C. al Fine Go back to the beginning and end at ***Fine***.

D. C. al Coda Go back to the beginning and play to the coda sign (\oplus), then skip to the ***Coda*** to end the piece.

Other Musical Symbols you are likely to see in music you will play.

D. S. al Fine Go back to the sign (§) and end at ***Fine***.

D. S. al Coda Go back to the sign (§) and play to the coda sign (\oplus), then skip to the ***Coda*** to end the piece.



Repeat the previous measure.



Repeat the previous two measures.

A Few Words About Sight-Reading

When students ask me what they should do to develop their reading skills, my answer is always the same: *Read*. Like any other area of skill, there aren't too many "secrets," just real practice. That being said, I do want to mention a few things that will help you to get the most out of this book and any other reading material.

The first rule is to look ahead. Just as when you're driving a car, you wouldn't dare to think of only looking at the ten feet of asphalt you happen to be on at the moment. You look out in front of you, as far as you can see, in order to be prepared for any obstacles that may be coming your way.

You can also improve your reading skills by learning to memorize. Try this: Look at the first measure of a piece of music and then look away or close your eyes and play what you can remember. With practice, you can memorize two, four, eight or more measures. This is a skill that you must develop in order to maximize your reading ability. It will allow you to look even farther ahead in the music and it will allow you to look at other people—the audience, the other musicians, the conductor—while you are playing.

Sometimes you can use "games" to help keep your practice time fun and interesting. One game is to take a piece of music and play every other measure (play the first measure, then jump to the third measure, then the fifth, etc.). This forces you to use your peripheral vision and look even farther ahead. Get creative—read every other measure, then try every third or fourth measure. You could even try reading down the page vertically. In other words, play the first measure of the first staff, then the first measure of the second staff, etc. When you get to the bottom you can go back to the top and read the down the second measure of each staff, then the third measure of each staff, and so on.

Perhaps the most important thing to keep in mind when practicing sight-reading is to not stop. If you hit a wrong note, just keep going. This will take a lot of concentration, as you will probably be tempted to stop and fix your mistakes. That's fine when you're working on a piece of music for a performance, but when you're practicing

reading you must not stop. This may mean playing at a slower tempo until your ability to sight-read improves.

Remember, the best way to become a better reader is to read. So, what are you waiting for? Dust off your music stand and your metronome, and let's go for it.

The "Jazz" Feel

Almost all of the music in this book is intended to be played with a "jazz" feel. This means that two consecutive eighth notes should sound more like the first and third notes of an eighth-note triplet. This gives the music a "swing" feel. The exceptions to this are the duets "Dolphins on Green Street," "Hymn-like" and "Kenny D." These should be played as written, with even eighth notes or "straight eighths."

Using a Metronome

When practicing reading, it's important to use a metronome to help you to keep a steady tempo. This is particularly important in sight-reading.

Many jazz players like to practice with their metronome clicking only the off-beats. In other words, if you're practicing a piece of music at 100 beats per minute, set your metronome to 50 beats per minute and think of the clicks as "2" and "4" Try practicing something simple, like a scale. After that becomes comfortable, try playing some of the rhythm studies in this book.

Using the CD

A CD is available demonstrating all the music in this book. The track numbers on the CD correspond with the track numbers listed throughout the book. For the Etudes Based on Jazz Standards section, the guitar part can be tuned out by using the balance control, enabling you to play along with the rhythm section. For the Duets section, you can tune out either guitar part allowing you to play either part with the CD. Be sure you have practiced the music before listening to the demonstrations on the CD.

Introduction and Tuning



Section #1: Blues Etudes

These etudes were written to help you get familiar with different positions on the guitar. Playing “in position” means keeping your fretting hand in one specific place on the neck, and using only one finger per fret. If you are in “third position,” use your first finger for notes in the third fret, your second finger for notes in the fourth fret, your third finger for notes in the fifth fret and your fourth finger for notes in the sixth fret. You can also use your first finger to stretch to the second fret and

your fourth finger can stretch to the seventh fret. Some of the etudes are in positions that may seem awkward. If an etude seems particularly difficult, try a slower tempo. If it’s still too hard, try a higher or lower position. Then return to the indicated position when you are ready.

Practice all of these etudes at a metronome marking between 80–132 beats per minute and experiment with a variety of different dynamics.

First Position

Blues in F #1



First Position

Blues in F #2



First Position

Blues in F #3



Section #2: Rhythm Studies

This section is made up of twelve rhythm studies. You should play these in as many positions as you can. Don't forget to use your metronome to help keep a steady groove.

Rhythm Study #1



This study starts with a simple two-measure phrase using the first rhythm found on page 12. The phrase is repeated several times, adding one new measure each time.



♩ = 70-120



Rhythm Study #2



This one contains most of the tricky rhythms you're likely to encounter in $\frac{3}{4}$ time. Try clapping the rhythms a few times before reading it with your guitar.

♩ = 70-120

