

Introduction

Being a good sight-reader is so important and it needn't be difficult! If you work through this book carefully – always making sure that you really understand each exercise before you play it you'll never have problems learning new pieces or doing well at sight-reading in exams!

Using the workbook

1 Rhythmic exercises

Make sure you have grasped these fully before you go on to the melodic exercises: it is vital that you really know how the rhythms work. There are a number of ways to do the exercises – see *Improve your sight-reading* Grade 1 for more details.

2 Melodic exercises

These exercises use just the notes and rhythms for the Stage, and also give some help with fingering. If you want to sight-read fluently and accurately, get into the habit of working through each exercise in the following ways before you begin to play it:

- Make sure you understand the rhythm and counting. Clap the exercise through.
- Look at the shape of the tune, particularly the highest and lowest notes. Which finger do you need to start on to be able to play it? The exercises have this fingering added to get you started.
- Try to hear the piece through in your head. Always play the first note to help.

3 Prepared pieces

Work your way through the questions first, as these will help you to think about or 'prepare' the piece. Don't begin playing until you are pretty sure you know exactly how the piece goes.

4 Going solo!

It is now up to you to discover the clues in this series of practice pieces. Give yourself about a minute and do your best to understand the piece before you play. Check the rhythms and hand position, and try to hear the piece in your head.

Always remember to feel the pulse and to keep going steadily once you've begun. Good luck and happy sight-reading!



Stage 1

Changing hand position

The examples in earlier books have all remained in a five-finger hand position. As you progress you will have to read music that changes hand position. Often the fingering is given, but you will need to develop a feeling for the best time to change position – otherwise you'll simply run out of fingers!

Often the changes are related to scale and arpeggio patterns – this is another reason why it's important to know your scales! You'll find lots of fun scale practice in this volume's sister book *Improve your scales!* Grade 3.

Look at the next phrase – it moves out of the C major five-finger position. Can you see the best place to move hand position? Think about the fingering you use in a C major scale.



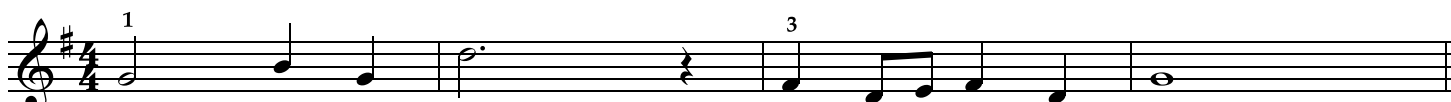
Here's the solution – you probably worked it out! You will put a 1st finger on the F – just as in playing a C major scale.



Sometimes there may be more than one fingering to choose from, depending on the melodic pattern. Have a look at this tune and think about which finger is best to put on the F# at the start of the second phrase.



The best solution is to put a 3rd finger on the F# (though a 4th would also work).



Most of the examples in this book change hand position. Always be on the look-out for where your hand position will move and you'll never run out of fingers!

Prepared pieces

- 1 What is the key of this piece? Play the scale (or microscale*) and arpeggio.
- 2 What do you notice about the melodic pattern in bars 3 to 6?
- 3 What will you count? Tap the rhythm of each hand separately. Now tap the rhythms of both hands together.
- 4 Look through the piece for changes of hand position.
- 5 What is the musical significance of the *dim.*?
- 6 How will you put character into the music?

Maestoso

1

- 1 What is the key of this piece? Play the scale (or microscale*) and arpeggio.
- 2 Can you spot any repeated patterns – rhythmic or melodic?
- 3 What will you count? Tap the rhythm of each hand separately. Now tap the rhythms of both hands together.
- 4 Play the first note in each hand and try to hear the piece in your head.
- 5 Notice the one change of hand position.
- 6 How will you put character into the music?

Elegantly

2

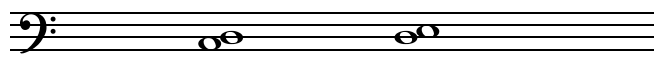
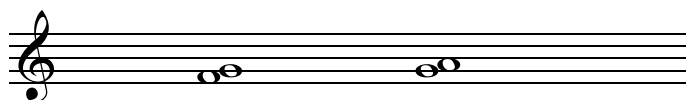
* See page 40 for details.

Stage 2

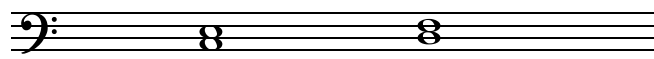
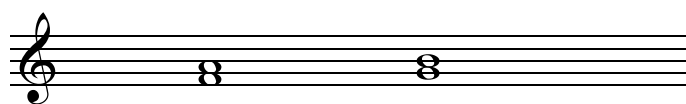
Chords

As well as single-note melodic lines you will also come across chords – two or more notes played together. Here are some examples:

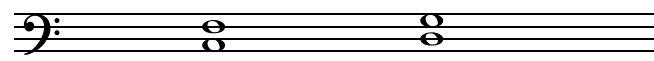
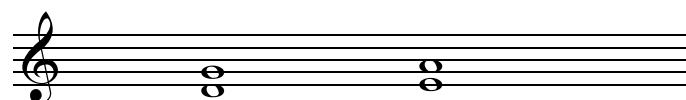
Seconds:



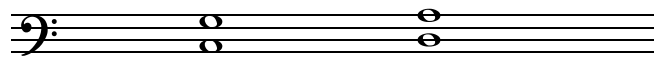
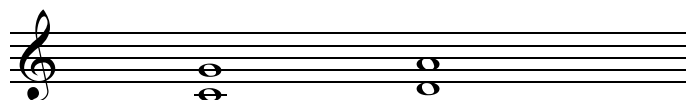
Thirds:



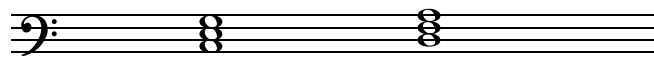
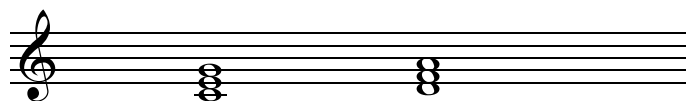
Fourths:



Fifths:

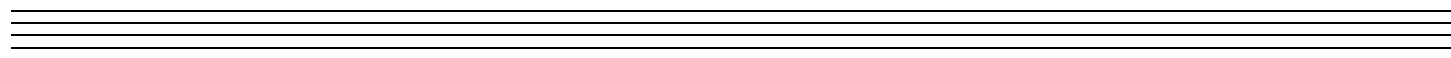


Triads (made up of the first three notes of an arpeggio):



Practise these chord shapes in different keys.

Write down some of your own favourite chords:



Prepared pieces

- 1 What is the key of this piece? Play the scale. Which fingers will you use for the chord at the start of the right-hand part?
- 2 Which notes are affected by the key signature?
- 3 Can you spot any repeated patterns – melodic or rhythmic? Are there any scale patterns?
- 4 What will you count? Tap the rhythm of each hand separately. Now tap the rhythms of both hands together.
- 5 How will you finger the last four bars of the right hand? Why?
- 6 How will you give an expressive performance?

1

☐

Calmly

- 1 What is the key of this piece? Play the scale. How will you finger the chord in the first bar of the left hand? Where does this chord appear again?
- 2 Which notes are affected by the key signature?
- 3 What will you count? Tap the rhythm of each hand separately. Now tap the rhythms of both hands together.
- 4 What is the connection between the right and left-hand notes in bar 1?
- 5 Play the first notes in each hand and try to hear the piece in your head.
- 6 What ingredients give you clues to the character of this music?

2

☐

Andante