

Improve your sight-reading!

Paul Harris

Stage 1 **Playing musically**

Stage 2 **Simple syncopations**

Stage 3 

Stage 4 

Stage 5 **More chords**

Stage 6 **More rhythms in** 

Stage 7  **and** 

Stage 8 **More rhythms in** 

Stage 9 **Revision of keys and rhythms**

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 these examples – 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 and think about the best way to finger it.
- 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

Playing
musically

Whenever you speak you put expression into what you say. Do the same with your sight-reading performances! As you're preparing the piece, as well as thinking about the notes, shape and rhythm, think about how you'll interpret the piece – or play it musically. You will need to think about:

- Does it require crisp or more gentle and sustained playing?
- Do you need to use accents in addition to those that are marked?
- Is it a tune with accompaniment? (Balance of hands will be important if so.)
- Are both hands equally important?
- What would be an effective speed?

Rhythmic exercises

Always count two bars before you begin each exercise – one out loud and one silently.

1

2

Melodic exercises

Brightly

1

3

Prepared pieces

- 1 What are the clues to the character of this piece?
- 2 Should the notes be played *legato* or detached?
- 3 Think about your fingering and changing hand position.
- 4 Tap the rhythm of the piece, hands together.
- 5 Play the first note of each hand and then hear the piece in your head as best you can.
- 6 Do you feel confident that you'll give an accurate performance?

1

Calmato

mp

- 1 What are the main clues to the character of this piece?
- 2 What interval is formed by the first two notes of the left hand?
- 3 How many bars are based on scale and arpeggio patterns? (Play the scale and arpeggio.)
- 4 Look through the piece for changes of hand position.
- 5 Tap the rhythm of the piece, hands together.
- 6 Play the first note of each hand and then hear the piece in your head as best you can.

2

Con spirito

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