

Sight-Reading Advice

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Sight-Reading: the two works that strike fear in most musicians' hearts. First, remember that term has two words: sight and reading. In other words you need to develop your music reading skills before you can expect yourself to read at sight. Technical and lyrical etude books serve as a wonderful tool to improve these skills. Having developed your reading skills, the best way to improve at sight-reading is to simply do it regularly and to have a strategy! Scan over the music in three simple steps:

1) Rhythm

- What note value gets the beat? (Quarter-note, Eighth-note, etc.)
- How fast is the beat?
- How many beats per measure?
- Take inventory: what types of rhythms are present?
- What do you need to subdivide?
- Lightly tap the tricky spots.

2) Pitches

- What is the key signature?
- Are there accidentals?
- What fingerings should you use?
- Lightly finger the tricky spots.

3) Instructions

- Are there dynamics?
- Are there articulations?
- Are there tempo or style instructions?
- Is there a roadmap?

Take a deep breath. Stay relaxed and play with your best sound. Once you start, do not stop. Everyone makes mistakes when sight-reading! Dive in, keep going, and try your best!