

Reading Rhythms and Sightreading

- Tricks to sightreading in 6/8
- Reading swing rhythms
- How to sightread better



Let's start with a brief explanation of 6/8...

In 6/8, technically the eighth note gets 1 beat. However, *in reality*, we usually think of 6/8 in 2, with the \downarrow getting 1 beat. This is crucial to understanding the tricks to sightreading in 6/8.

2 Strong beats in the measure

A musical staff in treble clef with a 6/8 time signature. The staff contains a sequence of notes: a quarter note on the first line, followed by two eighth notes on the first line, a quarter note on the second line, a quarter note on the second line, and two eighth notes on the second line. Two thick horizontal bars are drawn below the staff, one under the first three notes and one under the last three notes. Two arrows point from the text '2 Strong beats in the measure' to the first and fourth notes. Below the staff, two arrows point from the text 'Each strong beat can be divided into 3 notes' to the first and fourth notes. A small number '4' is written below the staff between the two thick bars.

Each strong beat can be divided into 3 notes

What questions do you have?

Reading Swing Rhythms...

It's really not possible to learn how to swing in words. The ONLY way to learn how to swing is by LISTENING and IMITATING.



Learning how to read swing rhythms is also best learned by listening and imitating. However, some discussion can give us a starting point.

-SWING BEI MIR BIST DU SCHÖN -SHALOM SECUNDA


A-



E7



A- G7 F7 E7

 = "doo dit dit"

- Eighth notes that are written as tied to other eighth notes are usually played as a "dit".
- Quarter notes that land on off-beats are usually played as "dit" unless marked long.

Step 1: Listen! (*internalize it, feel it*)

Step 2: Sing it! (*match everything exactly*)

Step 3: Play it! (*match the articulations and feel that you sang*)

Let's listen & sing it (1st me, then together) with the "scat syllables":

A

A

B

A

Now, I'm going to play through it (in concert key). Sing the scat syllables along with me as I play it. Does it line up? (If you are a concert key instrument and would like to play along, feel free)

What questions do you have?

How to Sightread Better...

1. Keep a steady beat.
I highly recommend using a metronome whenever you sightread!
2. Look at the BIG PICTURE and visually identify where your downbeats are.
Just like we did with 6/8 rhythms
3. The most important thing is playing correct RHYTHMS. Correct notes are secondary.
You could play all the right notes, but if you don't put them in the right spots, they're not right notes anymore because you're not with the band.
4. Try to think in your key signature.
It might help to play through the major scale that goes with that key signature before you start sightreading.
5. Focus on putting correct notes on the downbeats.
When you think in your key signature and you put the right notes on the downbeats, you'll be surprised at how many correct notes you'll play in between the downbeats!
6. Sightread as OFTEN as possible!
Buy a new etude book and force yourself to sightread one etude each day, slowly, with a metronome. It really is true that the more you do it, the better you get at it.

7. Pretend like you know what you're doing
Confident sound, posture, keep going, don't stop/restart...
You just might surprise yourself!

What questions do you have??