

I'm not a bot



and rhythm, but articulation and dynamics are also important musical parameters. Even if you misplace a few notes when playing, if you're shaping the material properly through expression and intensity, then you can still capture the spirit of a piece of music, and that's no less important. So, keep an eye on things like slurs, staccato and tenuto marks, and dynamics beneath the slave - and tempo markings too. Incorporate these considerations into your process as soon as possible, and your ability to faithfully realise music will progress faster. Tip 3: Trust As we said, sight-reading is all about binding the notes on the page to actually playing your instrument. When you're a beginner, you learn how each note on the page corresponds to an action on your instrument. Once you reach a point of union between your eyes and your fingers or breath, have faith in your muscle memory. Stop looking at what your hands are doing and focus on the music in front of you. The best sight-readers fix their eyes to the sheet music and won't be glancing down. The sooner you can resist the urge to look away, the better. Tip 4: Study Whether you're playing in an ensemble or in an examination, there'll invariably be some amount of time between seeing the music for the very first time, and actually playing it. This window is precious and can make or break a piece of sight-reading - you have to capitalise on this time. Scan the sheet music from start to finish. Get a feel for the contour of the piece and prepare for any unexpected turns. Sound it out in your head, hum along if that helps. Develop a shorthand that works for you and use it to make the kind of annotations that aid your playing. Every musician is unique - figure out what's most helpful to you. Tip 5: Practice It's a bit cheeky to include this once again, but it can never be stressed enough - practice is everything. Once you've set your landmarks, learned your scales, and developed your shorthand, just keep sight-reading. It's something that really does get much easier with time. Don't wait until a rehearsal or the examination to see how far your sight-reading has come since the last time you did it. Try it in a music lesson. Get used to confronting new pieces of music and trying them out straight away. The nkoda library is full of them - start a free trial and have a seven-day blitz of sight-reading practice. What next? The great composer-pianist Franz Liszt supposedly played Grieg's Piano Concerto in A minor at first sight. Until you reach that kind of level, it's always possible to get better at sight-reading. Bear in mind that sight-reading is something that has to be carried out in the moment. Like performance, practising at home is quite different to doing it when it really counts. So don't feel nervous about those experiences - they're what really helps to raise your ability. Taking on the challenges will only make you a more comfortable and better player.

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