

## **PIANO SIGHT-READING**

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Piano sight-reading is an extremely difficult goal to be accomplished. What does the student need to do to be prepared for the test? How does the teacher prepare students for this exam? This paper is trying to give answers to these questions.

To begin with, we could say that sight-reading is the opposite of music. With the term “music” we mean the succession of melodic and rhythmic motives, which relate to one another. That is to say, we notice that one rhythmic or melodic motif is repeated many times during the piece in different ways at the works of the great composers.

On the contrary, we can see that there are different melodic or rhythmic motives at sight-reading many times, which interchange each other. Also many times one rhythmic or melodic motif is interrupted and another one is appeared totally different. This happens because the purpose of sight-reading is to sit up and take notice of student, in order to become more careful in finding and performing the different melodic or rhythmic motives that exist in one piece.

We quote some examples, in order to show this variety and contrast of motifs that exist at sight-reading. Legato notes may exist and staccato notes may immediately be inserted. The rhythmic motif may also include one quaver with two semi-quavers and suddenly the opposite may be inserted, i.e. two semi-quavers with one quaver. This happens, as we have already

mentioned, in order to show the ability of the student to perform different melodic and rhythmic motives.

Unfortunately instead of having a variety of rhythmic and melodic motives at sight-reading, there is only one motif, which is repeated in various forms. As far as I am concerned, this is wrong, as it does not show the ability and the readiness of the student to perform various motives and be concentrated when performing sight-reading. Many times in the left hand there are arpeggio-chords from the beginning until the end of the piece, which are easy to be performed by a student. This is not helpful when trying to be ready to perform a piece for the first time, for which the exercise of sight-reading exists.

It is better to begin learning sight-reading from the moment the student begins to learn piano. Of course, sight-reading must be adapted to the abilities of each student. Additionally, it must be of proportional difficulty according to the student's abilities. A beginner should be able to perform sight-reading pieces at piano, which place both hands separately. Thus, the teacher can give to the beginner a piece with four bars, which will have simple notes in the right or in the left hand separately. Later, when the student continues to the next level, he/she can perform sight-reading pieces, in which both hands together can be used.

Regarding the method, which teachers use when teaching piano, I believe that methods like Beyer, as well as similar methods do not help the teaching of sight-reading. These types of methods are not suitable, as they have a consecutive rhythmic motif on the left hand, while they lay stress on the

right hand. On the contrary, methods such as John Thompson or similar ones help the student, as they develop both hands equally. For instance, John Thompson's method teaches the beginner middle C in both hands first. Later it teaches D on the right hand and B on the left hand. After that the student learns E on the right hand and A on the left hand. Later the student learns F on the right hand and G on the left hand. Using this method both hands are developed equally and it helps the student to have better results on sight-reading.

There are two types of students, those who are better at aural tasks and those who are better at sight-reading tasks. It is very unusual for the same student to have both types. The student who is better at aural tasks memorizes the melodic and rhythmic motives, which enter through hearing to the brain. The student who is better at sight-reading memorizes the melodic and rhythmic motives, which enter through eyesight to the brain. That, who is better at aural tasks has usually more talent to improvise on the piano or on other instruments, like violin etc. The person who is better at aural tasks is said to be more talented in music and it is difficult for him/her to watch the score. He/she likes performing pieces not from the score but from memory. The person who is better at sight-reading prefers performing pieces from the score. He/she easily memorizes the pieces that he/she learns through the score but aural exercises are difficult for him/her as well as performing songs, which he/she listens to from the radio or the television. In order a student to become better at piano he/she needs to combine both types, i.e. being good at aural and sight-reading tasks. If the student is good only at sight-reading, he/she needs to do aural exercises in order to improve. If the student is good only at aural, then he needs to do exercises at sight-reading.