

SIGHTREADING CHECKLIST

A GUIDE TO HELP YOU IMPROVE YOUR PIANO SIGHTREADING

This checklist will help you develop a step-by-step approach to sightreading. This is the checklist I use with my students when we work on sightreading skills together.

Apply this checklist to every piece you learn; over time you will eventually learn to go through these steps mentally when you sightread.

1. SCAN THE SCORE

- What is the TIME SIGNATURE?
- What is the KEY SIGNATURE?
- What is the most common NOTE VALUE?
- What is the FORM? (What repeats?)

2. OBSERVE PATTERNS

- Look for RHYTHMIC patterns.
- Look for MELODIC patterns.
- Look for ACCIDENTALS.
- Look at recurring ARTICULATION marks (slurs, staccato, etc).

3. ACTION ITEMS

- CLAP or TAP the first phrase.
- Identify the TEMPO you'll play.
- Count 1 bar silently in tempo, then PLAY.
- After playing once, REFLECT.
 - Where were there issues?
 - What needs attention?
- PRACTICE the piece for 1-3 minutes.
- Play it 1-2 more times, reflecting after each time.
- THE GOAL: by the last repetition, you can play it through with the correct rhythm and (mostly) correct notes.