

Preface

Sight Reading for Guitar was born out of the need for a methodical process for reading music on the guitar. Most guitar method books that teach music reading introduce too many ideas too quickly. Others, in an attempt to be comprehensive, provide only a few exercises for each concept, string, or position, and so the student winds up memorizing *those* exercises rather than learning to read generally. The result is musical and technical confusion.

It doesn't help that the sight-reading guitarist faces a few extra hurdles. While most other string instrumentalists must learn only four strings, the beginning guitarist must contend with what can seem like a sea of strings, not to mention the array of fingering options that come with it. The average guitar student also does not have the luxury of the string ensemble, concert band, or choir—other musicians forcing them to stay on the beat, which sharpens their reaction time to the written note. Confronted with these problems, the student may forego reading altogether, much to his detriment.

After composing dozens of exercises for my classes, I found a solution that centers on presenting ideas incrementally and accumulatively, with many exercises dedicated to each idea. I focus on the natural notes in the first position across all six strings, one string at a time. This acquaints the student with one of the most used areas of the fretboard and removes much of the ambiguity around fingering. Once the notes on a given string are learned, that string is gradually incorporated into the previously studied strings; it becomes anchored to a body of knowledge. Time signatures are limited to 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, and 6/8, and the note values to whole, dotted half, half, dotted quarter, quarter, and eighth notes—all common and all essential.

Over many years of teaching, I have developed a few methods for reading music on the guitar. 1) Before attempting an exercise, recite the notes. 2) Count the meter and clap the rhythm. 3) Perform the exercise on the guitar. Dissecting the notes and rhythm away from the guitar creates a solid foundation and helps prepare the pupil mentally for later execution on the instrument.

This book intends to teach music reading on guitar regardless of musical style. First semester students, beginners, and accomplished guitarists who are eager to learn note reading will find this material accessible and beneficial.

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