

This book is dedicated to Deral Johnson. Soon after I began composing music, Deral looked me hard in the eye and said, "What we really need is some good, contemporary sight-singing material. Any chance you might be able to write some?"

Special thanks to Deral Johnson, Victoria Meredith and Carol Rogers for feedback and suggestions.

What Is Sight-Singing?

- reading a piece of choral or vocal music that you have never seen before, without the help of a piano or other singers.
- singing music for the first time with the words, pitches and rhythms as accurate as possible.

POSTURE

Body: balanced (do not lean to either side)

Head: balanced and level (your jaw should not be pointing up or resting too close to your chest)

Arms and Shoulders: relaxed

Music: high enough so that you can see both the music and the conductor without having to move your head

Standing

Feet: 1) spaced the same distance apart as the width of your shoulders;
2) "rooted" in the ground (use the strength of your whole body when you sing)

Knees: slightly flexed (locked knees are too rigid)

Sitting

Body: 1) straight and relaxed (do not lean against the back of your chair)
2) sit "hard on the bones" to keep balanced and centered

Feet: flat on the floor (legs or ankles should not be crossed)

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1

staff



notes



The higher the notes are on the staff, the higher in pitch they will sound.

tonic **home**

dominant **far away from home**

tonic dominant tonic



do so do



Exercise 1

Gently *p* *mf* *p*



Lull-a-by, lull-a-by, lull-a-by loo; Lull-a-by, lull-a-by, lull-a-by loo.

2


| | | |
|--------------|---|----------|
| quarter note |  | one beat |
| quarter rest |  | one beat |

You do not sing during a rest but the feeling of the music continues, even without any sound. Try to feel the beat in the silence.

Exercise 2

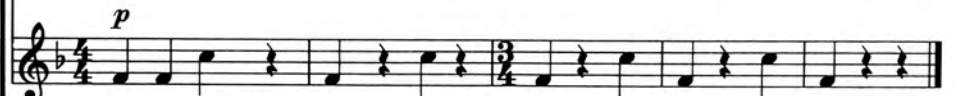
Lightly *p*

Part 1



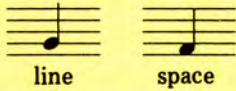
See the clouds float slowly by: so soft like snow.

Part 2

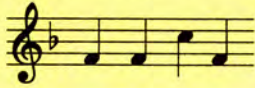


See the clouds float by: white and soft like snow.

A note may be on a line or a space:

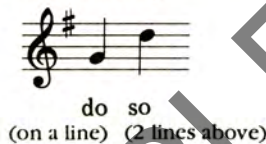


Every note on the bottom space will have the same pitch. Whether it is at the beginning, middle or end of a song, it will still sound at the same pitch.



"Do" is the tonic (home).

"So" is the dominant (far away from home).



Exercise 3

Like a March
mf

Part 1
Rum tum, rum tum tum; rum tum, rum tum.

Part 2
Rum tum, rum tum tum; rum tum, rum tum.

tempo

speed

Music sounds quite different when sung at a different tempo **but still looks exactly the same!**

REMINDER

Sing in tune at each tempo!

4

eighth notes



one beat

Notice the horizontal beam joining the two notes; sometimes it is slanted:



The notes look like they are one unit, lasting one beat, sung evenly.

Say this rhythm using “dah” or “loo”:



Exercise 4

Slowly
mp

Part 1

Tick - tock, tick - tock, tick - tick - tock, tick - tick - tock;

mf

Part 2

Tick - tock, tick - tock;

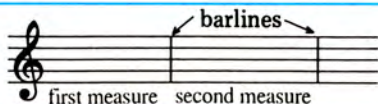
tick - tock, tick tock, tick-tick-tock, tick-tick-tock,

tick-tick, tick-tick-tock; tick - tock, tick -

tick-tock, tick-tock; tick, tick-tick-tock, tick-tock!

tock; tick-tick - tock, tick-tock, tick-tock!

barlines



first measure second measure