

Reading Music as taught to me by my mother, Genia Bar-Niv

To me, reading music starts with the first lesson.

- I present the full grand piano staff explaining that we write notes on lines and in spaces.
- I teach C, D, E and C, B, A stemming from middle C.
- I present steps (seconds) and skips (thirds):
 - steps are line to space / space to line (different)
 - skips are line to line / space to space (same).
- From here starts an intervallic journey: a step and a skip make the interval of a 4th, 2 skips make a 5th, etc.
- All odd numbered intervals are line to line / space to space.
- All even numbered intervals are line to space / space to line.
- Guide notes / landmarks help identify all the notes:
- Mirror image does too. I count lines and spaces from the center outwards.
 - 3rd spaces are C, one octave above middle C and one octave below.
 - 2nd ledger lines are C 2 octaves above and under middle C.
- The 2nd line is the note of the clef. The 'belly' of G clef (treble clef) points to G; the belly, line surrounded with 2 dots, of F clef (bass clef) points to F.
- The space above all lines in treble clef is G. My mother used to call it Sunny G and draw rays around it.
- The space below all lines in bass clef is F. My mother used to call it the moon.
- Intervallic reading works horizontally and vertically, and even further apart horizontally.
- Incidentally, F always mirrors G and Vice Versa.
- Now come chord shapes and there aren't that many different ones: for triads we have 3 shapes, root and 2 inversions. The root is made of two 3rds and the inversions of one 3rd and one 4th.
- Similarly, 7th chords have 4 shapes, root and 3 inversions.
- There's no need to figure out every note in a chord or in a passage; start seeing shapes of chords and patterns of horizontal movements.
- Recognize scales, arpeggios, sequences, etc.
- One has to learn theory of course to apply key signature to the music that's being read.
- Rhythm needs to follow the number of beats per measure. If you break down everything to four 1/16s per quarter, you've covered most of existing music. Learn to understand triplets, 6/8, and other rhythms in 3s and you're set to go.

Good music reading starts with the first lesson and continues with every new piece.

You just learn to read like you learned to read your language. And then you read.

Of course, once you have good foundations, the more you read the better you become in reading.

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