

the **BIG** book of  
SIGHT READING  
**DUETS**  
for **TRUMPET**  
*100 Sight Reading Challenges  
for You and a Friend*

*David Vining*

*Edited by Jason Dovel*

The Big Book of Sight Reading Duets for Trumpet  
David Vining  
MPM 12-140  
\$24.95

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2700 Woodlands Village Blvd. #300-124  
Flagstaff, Arizona 86001  
[www.mountainpeakmusic.com](http://www.mountainpeakmusic.com)

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ISBN 978-1-935510-78-9

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## Foreword

David Vining's wide range of experience as a musician has instilled in him a deep understanding for the need to be a good sight-reader, and his knowledge provides savvy insights on how to develop this skill while utilizing his new book, *The Big Book of Sight Reading Duets*. Duets have been recognized as a wonderfully entertaining and effective means of improving sight reading skills because of the need to view both parts simultaneously, and the necessity to constantly look ahead in the score. In addition, should an error occur in either part, the players must learn to make quick adjustments so that the musical performance continues without interruption. Vining's technical advice and suggestions in the early part of the book are essential.

Although originally composed for trombones, Jason Dovel must be acknowledged for his excellent transcriptions of these duets for trumpets. A recognized composer and arranger in his own right, Dr. Dovel is considered an expert in scoring for trumpet. This is a fun and challenging book for trumpeters of all levels, and should be practiced daily.

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## Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the many talented individuals who helped me create *The Big Book of Sight Reading Duets*:

- ♪ Thanks to Ralph Sauer, who spent time reading the duets and discussing improvements and tweaks with me. He also had many helpful editorial suggestions—turns out Ralph is every bit as talented an editor as he is musician, and I appreciate him lending his expertise in both areas.
- ♪ Thank you to Will Houchin, visionary graphic designer, whose cover designs have helped define the look of Mountain Peak Music.
- ♪ Thanks to Andrew Hitz and Jason Dovel, who were “instrumental” in helping tweak the introduction and editing the book for use on trumpet.
- ♪ I am grateful to my son, Ben Vining, composer and cellist extraordinaire, who helped me understand a student’s perspective and suggested I put these duets in some sort of logical progressive order.
- ♪ Most importantly, thanks to Leslie Vining, my business and life partner, whose editorial talents and attention to detail keep me grounded and elevate everything she touches.

## Introduction

Have you ever choked on sight reading? Many musicians shudder at the thought of having to play something at first sight—especially for an audition. It is extremely frustrating to play prepared excerpts beautifully at an audition only to come unglued when confronted with sight reading.

There is no question that sight reading is a valuable skill for musicians. Many auditions require sight reading and it is a critical technique for a freelancer. Musicians who sight read well tend to think on their feet better than those who don't, and this attribute improves their ability to perform under pressure. Good sight readers have a musical intuition and heightened perception that allows them to understand complicated rhythms, harmonies, and musical forms. Sight reading is essentially the confluence of countless diverse musical skills.

If sight reading is so important, why don't more people take practicing it more seriously? Part of the problem is a lack of guidance. There are few resources devoted entirely to sight reading and even fewer stated strategies for improvement. Considering this, we will first discuss strategies for improving your sight reading, then we will learn how to use this book to maximize your progress.

## Suggestions for Improving Sight Reading

We'll start with the obvious, traditional advice that can be applied immediately every time you sight read, and work our way toward the less conventional, long-term strategies. The first two suggestions are to be done before you play and the second two are to be done as you play. The remainder of the suggestions are long term strategies that require attention over time.

### Before You Play:

#### 1. Scan Before You Play

Before you begin to play, STOP! Don't just dive in headlong and hope for the best. Hanging on for dear life and guessing at rhythms and pitches is not good sight reading technique. Play smart: before you begin, take a moment to look over the piece, noticing the following critical points:

- Road Map: Are there repeats? Are there first and second endings? Is there a D.S. or D.C. al Coda?
- Key
- Time Signature
- Tempo
- Style
- Articulation
- Dynamics
- Changes in any of the above
- Melodic or Rhythmic Patterns



- Accidentals / Tonicizations (for an explanation of this term, see “Analyze” below)

## **2. Model for Success**

The last thing you do directly before you play is critical to your success. At the end of your scanning session (described above), finger the last sharp or flat in the key signature because this is the note you are most likely to miss when you play. In the key of G-flat major, for example, the last flat is C-flat so you would literally finger that pitch to model the behavior of playing in that key.

In addition, you should sing and finger the first measure in your head before you begin. The pitches needn't be exact (especially if you don't have perfect pitch!), but finger the correct notes and sing the proper rhythms and intervals at the right tempo in your head as best as you are able.

By fingering the last sharp or flat in the key signature and singing the first measure in your head before you begin, you are creating a model that reinforces what you will do when you actually play.

### **As You Play:**

## **3. Look Ahead**

Good sight readers don't necessarily look directly at the note they are currently playing. Instead, they are constantly looking ahead at what is coming up so they are not surprised by an accidental or unusual rhythm.

## **4. Don't Stop**

To be a good sight reader, train yourself to keep going no matter what. This is a difficult technique for most musicians because we spend our practice time stopping and starting in order to fix mistakes, but this approach does not work when sight reading. This book offers a solution to this problem by making players sight read with a partner. Playing duets incentivizes continuing to play no matter what because you don't want to let down your partner. There is a collective obligation to play the music through to the end so it makes sense.

These first four strategies can (and should!) be incorporated immediately. The other strategies, listed below, fall into the category of long term tactics. They are extremely effective but must be developed over time.

## **5. Interpret and Execute Rhythms at Sight**

A fundamental understanding of rhythm and an ability to interpret and execute rhythms at sight is a prerequisite to being a good sight reader. In fact, the best sight readers play rhythms correctly even if they don't always play every pitch correctly. This is particularly important when sight reading in an ensemble situation because it is impossible to stay together if the rhythms are not right.

To improve one's rhythmic acuity can be challenging because often there are too many other musical obligations to effectively isolate rhythmic deficiencies and fix them. In this book, preliminary “Rhythm Duets” are provided in order to cultivate rhythmic

# Rhythm Duet #7

♩ = 84

Clap

Moderato (♩ = c. 108)

# 1. Simple March

The musical score for "1. Simple March" is written for two staves in 4/4 time. The tempo is Moderato, with a quarter note equal to approximately 108 beats per minute. The score is divided into measures, with measure numbers 4, 9, 14, 19, and 24 indicated at the start of their respective systems. The dynamics range from *mf* (mezzo-forte) to *f* (forte), with *p* (piano) also used. The melody is primarily in the right hand, with the left hand providing a steady accompaniment. The piece concludes with a final double bar line at measure 24.

4 *mf*

9 *p*

14 *mf* *p*

19 *f*

24 *p*

# 71. Stick to Your Guns

$\text{♩} = 132$

*f* *mp*

6

*mp* *p* *p*

11

*mf* *f* *mf* *f*

16

*p* *p*

21

*f* *f*

25

*p* *f* *p* *f*