

When a melody line only player, such as a flutist, reads music, their eye follows a horizontal line and flow of music.

# Deep River

**Traditional spiritual**  
**arr. Deborah Govenor**

Expressively



Harpists read COLUMNS (up and down) while at the same time looking ahead - sort of like driving a car.

♩ = 76

*mp*

2

2

The musical score is written for harp in 2/4 time, marked *mp* (mezzo-piano). The tempo is indicated as ♩ = 76. The score consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The first measure of the treble staff contains a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter rest. The bass staff contains a half note G3. Vertical boxes are drawn around the notes in the first three measures of both staves, highlighting the 'columns' of notes. In the first measure, the box in the treble staff covers the G4 note, and the box in the bass staff covers the G3 note. In the second measure, the box in the treble staff covers the A4 note, and the box in the bass staff covers the A3 note. In the third measure, the box in the treble staff covers the B4 note, and the box in the bass staff covers the B3 note. The notes in the treble staff are G4, A4, B4, and the notes in the bass staff are G3, A3, B3. The notes in the treble staff are quarter notes, and the notes in the bass staff are half notes.

Sometimes harpists (or keyboardists) read more than their own score, as do conductors. Here is the Deep River flute example with the harp accompaniment. It is a good example of how we must learn to read blocks of notes in a vertical manner. Even though there are boxes around the notes that the harp plays, the harpist ADDITIONALLY follows the flute part.

# Deep River

Traditional spiritual  
arr. Deborah Govenor

Expressively  
*mp*

*mp*

1

Below is a score where a conductor reads all 4 lines (parts) simultaneously. Focusing on the first beat of every measure gives you an anchor. To begin with, focus on the first beat of every measure and ignore the rest. When you are able to focus and gravitate toward the main beat of the music, then you may begin to absorb the rest. Example: The Butterfly for 4 harps.

The image displays a musical score for four harps, consisting of four staves. The music is written in treble and bass clefs with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 9/8. The score is divided into four measures. Vertical rectangular boxes are drawn around the first beat of each measure across all four staves, illustrating the concept of focusing on the first beat as an anchor. The notes in the first measure are: Treble 1 (G4), Treble 2 (G4), Bass 1 (G3), and Bass 2 (G3). The second measure notes are: Treble 1 (A4), Treble 2 (A4), Bass 1 (A3), and Bass 2 (A3). The third measure notes are: Treble 1 (B4), Treble 2 (B4), Bass 1 (B3), and Bass 2 (B3). The fourth measure notes are: Treble 1 (C5), Treble 2 (C5), Bass 1 (C4), and Bass 2 (C4). The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Good sightreading is a matter of scanning both up and down, left and right, and committing to short term memory. It is so very helpful to know theory, at least chords. If you can scan a piece of music and analyze the chords, your brain has something solid to commit to short term memory. Sightreading has much to do with short term memory - very short term. Some exercises follow.

1	2	3	4	5
C	D	E	D	E
B	F	A	E	A
G	G	G	A	C
D	C	D	G	B
E	D	C	C	G

The notes in a C chord are C E G. In the above graph, quickly scan up, down, right and left. Pick out the C E and G's.

<b>C</b>
<b>E</b>
<b>f</b>
<b>b</b>
<b>G</b>

To the left is one isolated beat. Look at it, get to know it, and then on your instrument, play the notes that are in the C chord and ignore the other notes.

**Here  
is  
another  
exercise  
in  
getting  
your  
brain  
to  
work  
vertically.**

**vertically  
work  
to  
brain  
your  
getting  
in  
exercise  
another  
yet  
is  
Here**



Pick out the word “red”

Red  
shoes  
are  
fun  
to  
wear  
with  
red  
socks  
and  
red  
pants

Red shoes  
are fun to wear  
with red socks  
and red shorts

Seeing, feeling and playing the downbeat is of utmost importance. If you can do that, you are well on your way because eventually the rest will fall into place. Review The Butterfly from previous page.

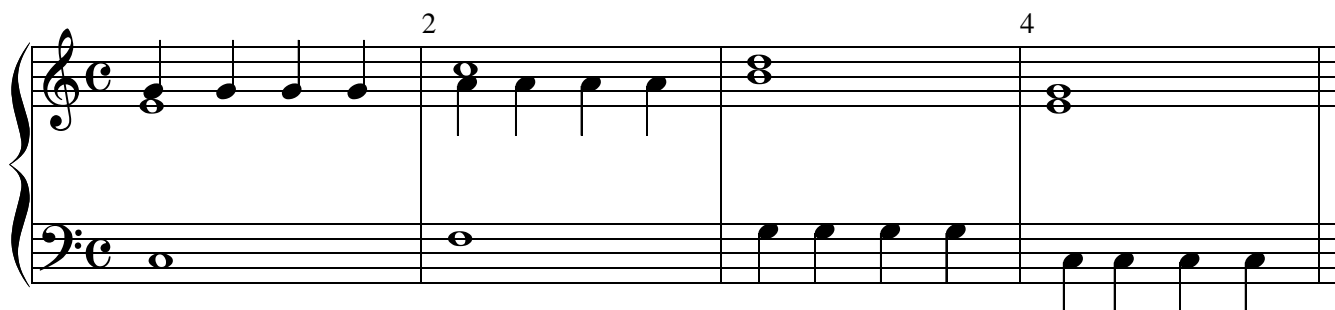
g	c	d	g
e	a	b	e
<b>C</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>C</b>

The preceding tablature translated is:

The musical notation shows four chords in a sequence. The treble clef staff uses a guitar-specific notation with an '8' symbol and fingerings 1, 2, and 4. The bass clef staff shows the root notes for each chord: C, F, G, and C.

Please try to quickly scan up and down to grasp the notes, as well as analyze the chords. When we sight read, we analyze, place, memorize, then play. Analyze each of the above chords, place your fingers on the corresponding strings, memorize by looking at your hands and at the music, then play.

Here is a variation on the preceding example. The notes are the same, but there are more of them. See if you can absorb one measure at a time.



Analyze measure one

Place measure one

Memorize measure one

Play measure one while looking at measure 2

# Steps 4 and 1 always overlap

Analyze

Place

Memorize

Play Analyze

Place

Memorize

Play Analyze

Place

Memorize

Play Analyze

Place

Memorize

Play Analyze

Place

Memorize

Play Analyze

Place

Memorize

Play Analyze

Place

Memorize

Play Analyze

Place

Memorize

Play Analyze

Place

Memorize

Play

Knowing some of the elements of composition will help your sight reading. We will discuss melodic countour and intervals.

Melodic Contour is the direction of the melody. You could take a pencil and draw arrows to outline or follow the direction of the melody.

If you can analyze the melodic contour and interval relationships briefly ahead of time, you have a good start to knowing the map of the tune before you begin to play.

## CUCKOLDS ALL IN A ROW

Arr. Ellen Tepper

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The musical score is for the piece 'Cuckolds All in a Row' by Ellen Tepper. It is written in G major (one sharp) and 6/8 time. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 96. The score consists of two staves: a treble clef staff for the melody and a bass clef staff for the accompaniment. The melody starts on a D4 note and moves through several intervals, including a dotted quarter note, an eighth note, and a triplet of eighth notes. The accompaniment provides a steady bass line with chords. The piece concludes with a first ending (marked '1.') and a second ending (marked '2.').

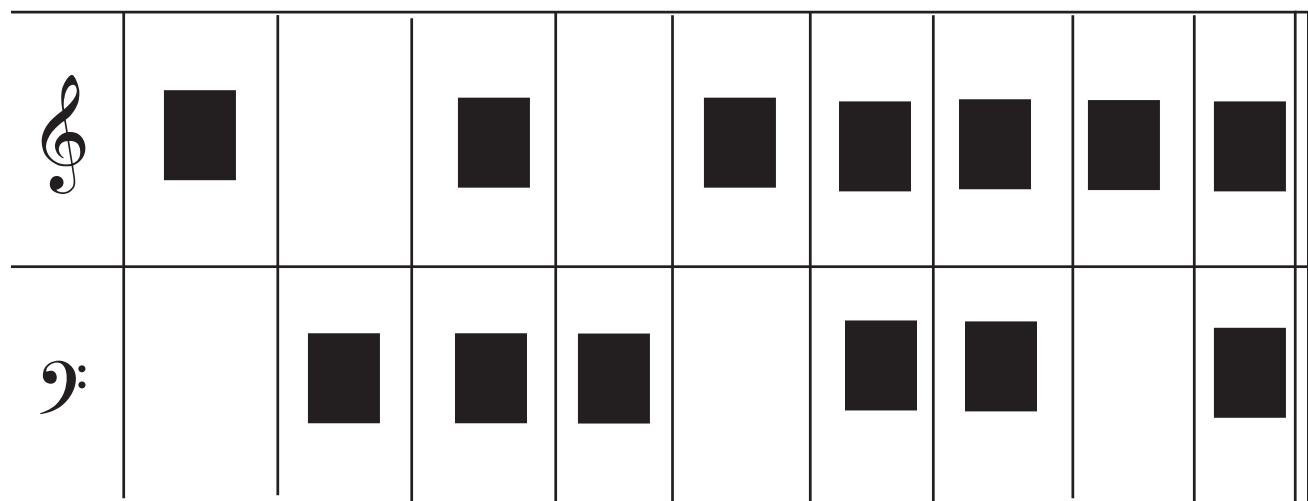
- Follow the melody with your finger while it is played
- Follow the melody silently
- Follow the melody and say the intervals-
- Follow the melody and say the distances ex: repeat, down one, etc.

Intervals are the distance between notes, and if you are a good judge of intervals, you are well on your way to easy sightreading. The below exercise begins on a treble clef E. Try also playing it by starting on any other note.

The image shows a musical exercise on a treble clef staff. The exercise consists of four measures, each containing two notes. The intervals between the notes are labeled as follows:

- Measure 1: 2nd interval (E4 to F4)
- Measure 2: 3rd interval (E4 to G4)
- Measure 3: 4th interval (E4 to A4)
- Measure 4: 5th interval (E4 to B4)
- Measure 5: 6th interval (E4 to C5)
- Measure 6: 7th interval (E4 to D5)
- Measure 7: octave interval (E4 to E5)

Fingerings are indicated above the notes: a '2' above the second note of the first measure, and a '4' above the second note of the seventh measure. Below the staff, there are four horizontal lines, each with a small black square marker positioned under the second note of each measure, likely indicating finger placement or a specific exercise technique.



**R L T L R T T R T**

R= right

L= left

T= together

Say out loud while tapping

You can tap on your lap, or pretend to be playing the harp, or you can actually tap your harp strings

Even the above exercise is asking you to look at three levels vertically: RH, LH and the R,L or T underneath the boxes.

You may want to try tapping one hand while playing the other. This has worked well for some people who really had a challenge in sight reading. This exercise works many parts of the brain. Try one measure at a time. Baby steps is the way to go. The interesting thing about this exercise is that if you have the rhythm memorized, you do not have to look at the notes of the hand that is doing the tapping. If you like, try it hands separately first, but really give it a good go hands together.

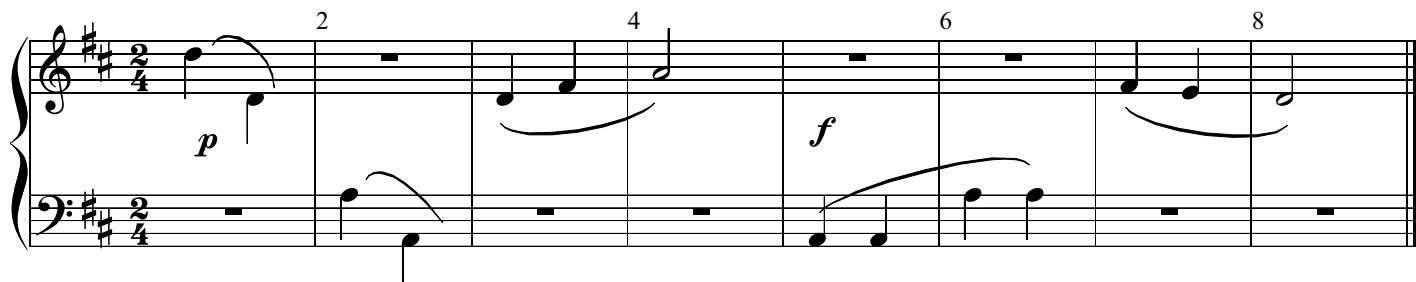
♩ = 96      tap the RH while playing the  
 D   LH notes

C      D      G      G

♩ = 96      D      C      D      G      G



Here is number 13 from page 29 of “Sightreading for Harp” book one by Anna Dunwoodie and Lisa Williamson of New Zealand. Please take notes on how one would best sight read this passage.



Sightreading Check List from **Sightreading for Harp volume 1** by Anna Dunwoodie and Lisa Williamson:

Check the key-signature-lever/pedal settings

Check the time -signature - how am I going to count?

As you read through, look for patterns, repeats, performance directions, dynamics, rests, tricky rhythms, tied notes.

Work out the fingering

Try out anything that looks difficult, but don't play the entire exercise

count in one bar before you start

don't stop to go back and correct mistakes.

**Sightreading for Harp is available in three volumes. It is a New Zealand publication, and available at Melody's Traditional Music [www.folkharp.com](http://www.folkharp.com)**

The musical score is written for piano in D major (two sharps) and 2/4 time. It consists of 8 measures. The first two measures are marked *p* (piano). The first measure contains a half note D4 and a quarter note A4. The second measure contains a half note D5. The third and fourth measures are marked *f* (forte). The third measure contains a half note D5 and a quarter note A5. The fourth measure contains a half note D6. The fifth and sixth measures are marked *f* (forte). The fifth measure contains a half note A5 and a quarter note G5. The sixth measure contains a half note A6. The seventh and eighth measures are marked *f* (forte). The seventh measure contains a half note A6 and a quarter note G6. The eighth measure contains a half note A7. The right hand plays a descending 3-note pattern in measures 5 and 6.

## Analysis of above exercise:

Octave Ds and octave As can be prepared ahead of time. While you are playing measure 1 you should be looking at measure 3. Measure three you will already have analyzed as a D major triad. The half note in measure 4 gives you a chance to look ahead and see that the next 2 measures are octave As - easy to place while you are playing the half note in measure 4. While you are playing the octave As in measures 5 and 6, prepare your RH on the descending 3-note pattern.