

keyboard

reading | technique | performance

READING 4

By Joe Bagg and Mamiko Kitaura

Instructional Design: Dr. Rachel Yoon, Dean of the School of Performance Studies, Musicians Institute

Edited by Joe Bergamini

Digital book design and cover by Mike Hoff

Layout by Rick Gratton

Music engraving by Willie Rose

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Managing Editor: Joe Bergamini

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Foreword

Welcome to Keyboard Reading 4. This course builds on skills learned in Keyboard Reading 1-3. Advanced topics from your Harmony & Theory courses will be applied to the keyboard reading material in this course in both single- sound and split-patch keyboard settings. Upon completion of the course, students will have familiarized themselves with the following topics:

- Reading music in 6/4 meter
- Reading in the context of playing duets
- Reading music in four parts (chorale style or “horn section” style)
- Navigating key changes and enharmonic keys
- Pattern recognition (chord patterns and arpeggios)
- Sight reading musical passages containing pedal tones
- Harmonic analysis of written music
- Reading *Real Book* or lead-sheet-style charts and playing with swing rhythms
- Improving bass clef reading skills (left hand)
- Reading rests

Chapter 1: Reading in 6/4 Time

The 6/4 time signature is rich with rhythmic interpretive possibilities. As such, many different rhythmic “feels” are possible within this meter. This can be a source of confusion for some of you, since you might be uncertain what the difference is between 6/4 vs. 6/8, and duple 6/4 vs. sextuple 6/4 (defined below), for example.

Let’s examine the first problem: 6/4 vs. 6/8

What is the difference between the following two examples?

Ex. 1.1

"In 2"



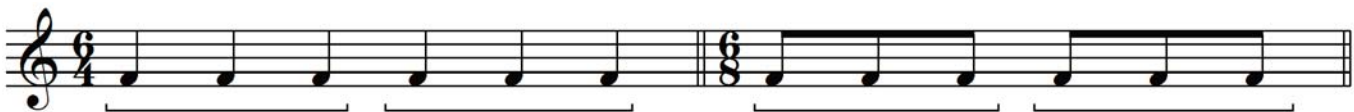
Ex. 1.2

"In 2"



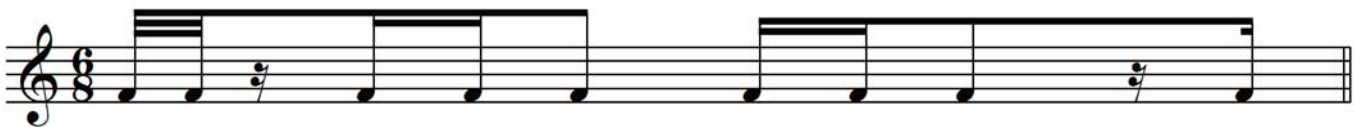
In actuality, there is no difference between the two. The only difference is in how they look on the page. Both examples contain two beats, each divided into three parts. The confusion lies in the fact that you have probably been told many times that a quarter note lasts twice as long as an eighth note; however, in the above example the indication "in 2" above each example means that the measures are to be felt as containing two beats (the individual notes themselves are subdivisions of the larger beat). The lack of beams in the 6/4 measure probably makes it even more difficult for you to intuitively recognize the larger beat. The solution to this problem is for you to always keep in mind this fact: that in each measure of 6/4 there are two groups of three quarter notes.

Ex. 1.3

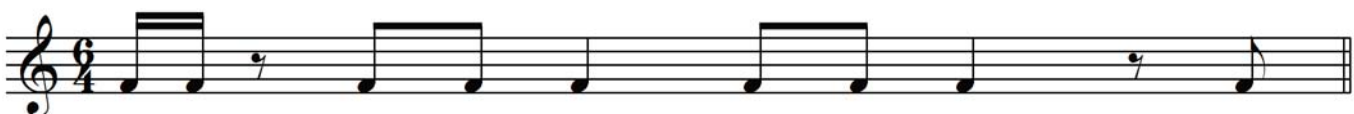


The reason why a composer would write a composition in 6/4 when 6/8 is easier to read is that there might be smaller subdivisions of the beat in the composition than might be easily readable in 6/8. In 6/4, these smaller subdivisions would thus be easier to read.

Ex. 1.4a



Ex. 1.4b



The second difficulty—that of duple 6/4 vs. sextuple 6/4—is more accurately described as the difference between compound duple vs. simple sextuple time. If you recall from your theory class covering simple vs. compound meters, simple meters mean that the beats can be divided into two notes. Compound meters, on the other hand, have beats that are divided into three notes.

Ex. 1.5

Simple meters



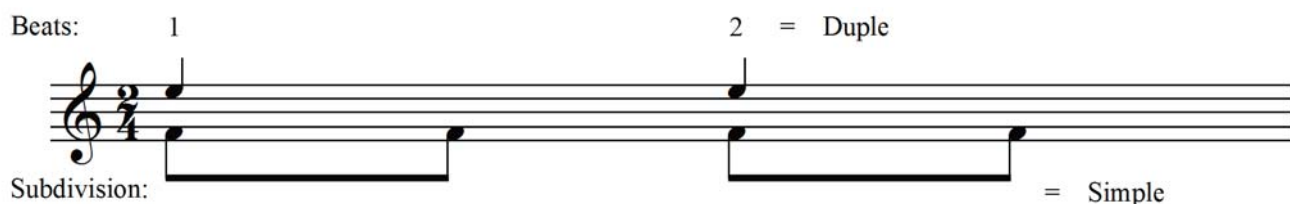
Ex. 1.6

Compound meters



Recall also that meters can be commonly classified as duple, triple or quadruple—these terms referring to the number of beats per measure (duple having two beats, triple having three beats, and quadruple having four beats). 2/4 meter, then, would be classified as simple duple, since it has two beats in each measure, and each of these beats is divided into two notes.

Ex. 1.7



The following examples break down several common meters into their respective classifications:

Ex. 1.8

- 2/4 & 2/2 are **simple duple**.

Beats:

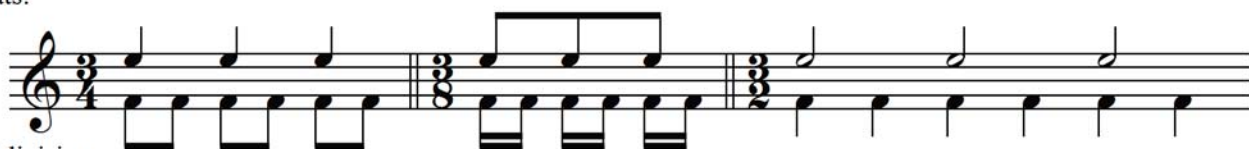


Subdivision:

- 3/4, 3/8 & 3/2 are **simple triple**.

Ex. 1.9

Beats:



Subdivision:

- 4/4 & 4/8 are **simple quadruple**.

Ex. 1.10

Beats:

The notation shows two measures. The first measure is in 4/4 time, with four quarter notes on the staff. Below the staff, four eighth notes are grouped together with a brace, representing the subdivision of one beat. The second measure is in 4/8 time, with four eighth notes on the staff. Below the staff, four sixteenth notes are grouped together with a brace, representing the subdivision of one beat.

- 6/8 is **compound duple**

Ex. 1.11

Beats:

The notation shows two measures in 6/8 time. Each measure contains two dotted quarter notes on the staff. Below the staff, two eighth notes are grouped together with a brace, representing the subdivision of one beat.

- 9/8 is **compound triple**

Ex. 1.12

Beats:

The notation shows three measures in 9/8 time. Each measure contains one dotted quarter note on the staff. Below the staff, three eighth notes are grouped together with a brace, representing the subdivision of one beat.

- 12/8 is **compound quadruple**

Ex. 1.13

Beats:

The notation shows four measures in 12/8 time. Each measure contains one dotted half note on the staff. Below the staff, four eighth notes are grouped together with a brace, representing the subdivision of one beat.

There are compositions that have more than four beats per measure: five is quintuple, six is sextuple, and so on. This brings us back to the distinction between duple 6/4 vs sextuple 6/4. Take a look at the following two examples:

Ex. 1.14

In 2 ♩ = 100

The notation shows a single measure in 2/4 time with four quarter notes on the staff. The first and third notes have accents (>).

Ex. 1.15

♩ = 100

The notation shows a single measure in 4/4 time with four quarter notes on the staff.

The first example is in compound duple time, since the tempo marking indicates that the measure is to be felt "in 2," i.e. the dotted half note is the larger beat that is felt, with the quarter notes being felt as subdivisions of the larger beat. The second example is in simple sextuple time, i.e. it has six beats (the quarter notes), each of which can be divided into two eighth notes. The two examples differ greatly in how they are felt (that little marking "in 2" makes all the difference in the world). The tempo indication also helps you figure out whether to feel each measure in two or six. Competent sight readers are keenly aware of how the beats of different time signatures are grouped and they take this into consideration when they encounter a chart for the first time.

Chapter 2: "Duet 64"

Below you will find the exercise for this unit, a composition entitled "Duet 6/4." As the title suggests, it's a duet, so find a practice partner and work on reading in 6/4 meter with them. Practice reading it with a metronome at a slow tempo, trying not to stop and correct mistakes.

"Duet 64" explores the many ways 6/4 time can be rhythmically interpreted. Piano 1 explores the 3+3 feeling of dividing the measure into two halves, but ends up in the 2+2+2 feeling of splitting the measure into three equal parts. Piano 1 also explores the triplet subdivision. Piano 2 explores the feeling of "four over six" by subdividing the measure into dotted quarter notes while maintaining a walking bass. Then the hands switch roles! Pay careful attention to how the parts interlock rhythmically. Be able to play either part.

Ex. 1.16

Duet 64

A piece in 6/4 time for two pianos

Kait Dunton

The musical score for "Duet 64" is presented in two systems. The first system shows the initial roles for Piano 1 and Piano 2. Piano 1 (top system) has a treble clef with notes and fingerings (5, 3, 4, 3, b5, 3, 4, 3) and a bass clef with a walking bass line. Piano 2 (bottom system) has a treble clef with chords and a bass clef with a walking bass line and fingerings (5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 5, 3, 2, b1, 2, 3, 4). The second system shows the roles switching: Piano 1's bass clef has notes and fingerings (b5, 3, 4, 3) and Piano 2's treble clef has notes and fingerings (b5, 3, 4, 3).

Ex. 1.16 cont'd

The image displays three systems of musical notation for piano accompaniment. Each system consists of a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The first system begins at measure 7. The treble staff features a melodic line with eighth-note triplets and fingerings (5, 4, 5, 3, 2, 1, 2, 3) repeated across measures. The bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and eighth notes. The second system continues the melodic and harmonic patterns. The third system, starting at measure 10, shows the melodic line with triplets and chords in the bass staff, concluding with a final cadence.