SheetMusicViewer – User Guide (2025 Edition)

A cross-platform PDF sheet music viewer by Calvin Hsia

Table of Contents

Contents

SheetMusicViewer – User Guide (2025 Edition) 1
- Table of Contents 2
- Welcome 3
- Getting Started 4
- Multi-Volume PDF Support 5
- Singles Folders 6
- Display Modes & Navigation 7
  - Display Modes 7
  - Navigation 7
- Instant Page Turns (Predictive Caching) 8
  - Playlists 8
- Inking & Annotations 9
- PDF Table of Contents (TOC) 10
- About SheetMusicViewer 11
  - About the Author 11

Welcome

SheetMusicViewer helps musicians browse, annotate, and navigate PDF music collections with speed and ease.

- Display 1 or 2 pages at a time
- Mark pages as Favorites
- Add ink annotations with stylus/finger
- Table of Contents support
- Supports multi-volume PDF sets
- In Show2Pages mode, allows a right hand page to be on the left, minimizing page turning

This guide will help you learn how to use the application.

Getting Started

- Run the program and choose a path to a root folder containing PDF music files.
- PDFs can contain any number of pages.
- The PDFs are never altered by the program. All auxiliary data (TOC, Favorites, Inking, LastPageNumberViewed) is stored in JSON files (automatically created).
- You can use the JSON files to store Composer name, Date, Notes, etc.
  Tip: Click the Image Icon in the toolbar above to view/edit the JSON for the current PDF.
- The program needs write permission to write the JSON metadata files alongside your PDFs.
- Press **Alt+C** or use the Menu to open the Music Chooser dialog. Choose "New…" Music Folder from the dropdown.

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Multi-Volume PDF Support

Large works can be split into multiple PDFs. All PDFs sharing the same root name are treated as one continuous book.

The icon for the volume is the first page as a thumbnail.

Naming Convention

File Name	Description
book.pdf (or book0.pdf)	First volume
book1.pdf	Second volume
book1a.pdf	Insert after book1
book2.pdf	Third volume

Example: SonatenI.pdf and SonatenI1.pdf form one book, while SonatenII.pdf is separate. This allows rescanning or inserting pages without renumbering later volumes.

Singles Folders

A subfolder ending with **“Singles”** (e.g., *GershwinSingles*) treats each PDF as an individual song.

- Alphabetical ordering
- First page of the first song becomes the **thumbnail**
- Automatically updates when items change
- TOC adjusts dynamically

A subfolder called **“Hidden”** is not searched.

Tip: Add a custom PDF title page that alphabetically sorts first.

Display Modes & Navigation

Display Modes

- Single Page Mode – one page per screen
- Two-Page Mode – two pages side by side

Navigation

- Thumb arrows: move by screenful or jump to next/previous favorite
- Arrow keys: move by screenful
- Bottom quarter of screen: tap to turn pages

In Two-Page Mode:

- Bottom outer quarters: advance **2 pages**
- Bottom inner quarters: advance **1 page**
- Top ¾: zoom/pan with two fingers

You can rotate the screen; auto-rotation adjusts the layout.

You can mark any page as a Favorite.

Playlists

You can make many playlists of songs, which will show up in the ChooseMusic view. You can sort/filter the left list, double click or multiselect to add to the playlist. The playlist is stored in .sheetmusicviewer\userdata.json, so will live with your music and sync automatically if on OneDrive.

Instant Page Turns (Predictive Caching)

PDFs use a lot of memory.

PDF rendering normally takes 100–500 ms — too slow for live performance.
SheetMusicViewer solves this with **predictive caching**.

Cache management is automatic.

Result: Page turns feel like real sheet music.

You can choose from many Bluetooth Page turning pedals to advance pages with your foot.

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Inking & Annotations

Inking is off by default.

- Check the **Ink** box (each page has its own in two-page mode)
- Draw with mouse, stylus, or finger
- Right-click menu to change color (black, red, yellow)
- Uncheck Ink to save

Tip: Zoom in for precise marking.

All ink data is stored in the PDF's accompanying JSON.

PDF Table of Contents (TOC)

A PDF might contain hundreds of pages

Open TOC editor:

- Click the thumbnail beside the slider
- or press **Alt+E**

Features:

- Import/export TOC in Excel format
- Add composer, date, and notes
- OCR support for scanned TOCs

Page Number Offset

Compensates for mismatches between physical pages and PDF pages (covers, intros, etc.).

About SheetMusicViewer

Created by **Calvin Hsia**
Email: calvin_hsia@alum.mit.edu
Source code: https://github.com/calvinhsia/SheetMusicViewer
Website: http://calvinhsia.com
Licensed under MIT License

About the Author

I have hundreds of piano music books collected over decades, kept on OneDrive. I digitized 30,000+ pages of my music using a Xerox WorkCentre scanner. I really love Ragtime! There's something so binary about it: powers of 2, 16 measures per verse, 2/4 time, syncopation.

I started this project in 2019 using Windows Presentation Foundation (WPF)

Enjoy your music!
– Calvin