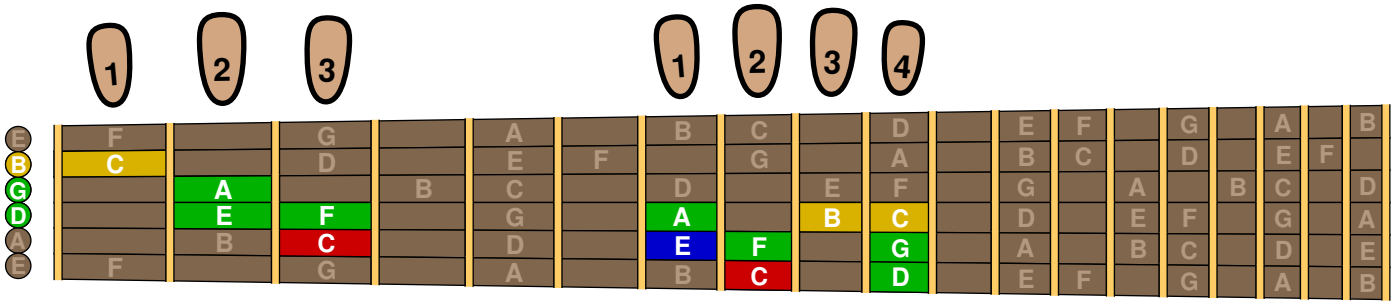
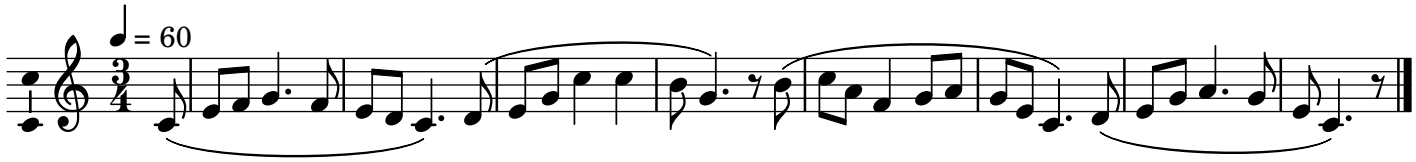
January Fretboard Exercises

Resolve (again) to sightread in two positions!

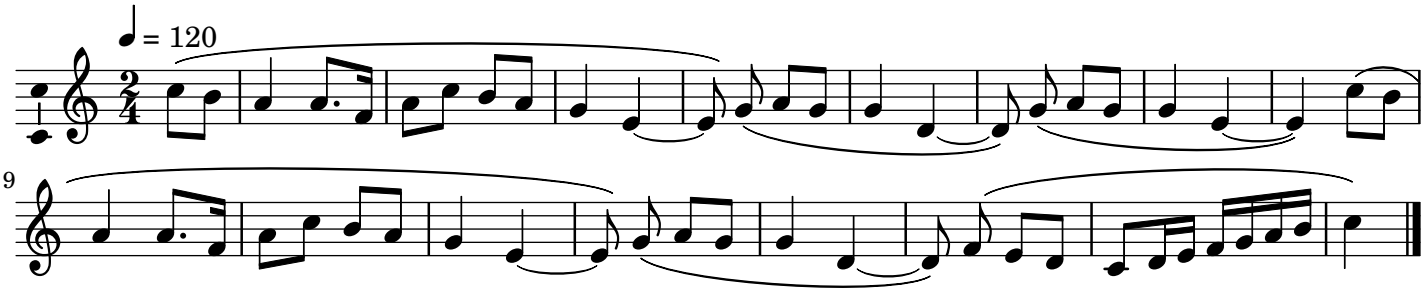


Read the back page to learn how to sightread this music...

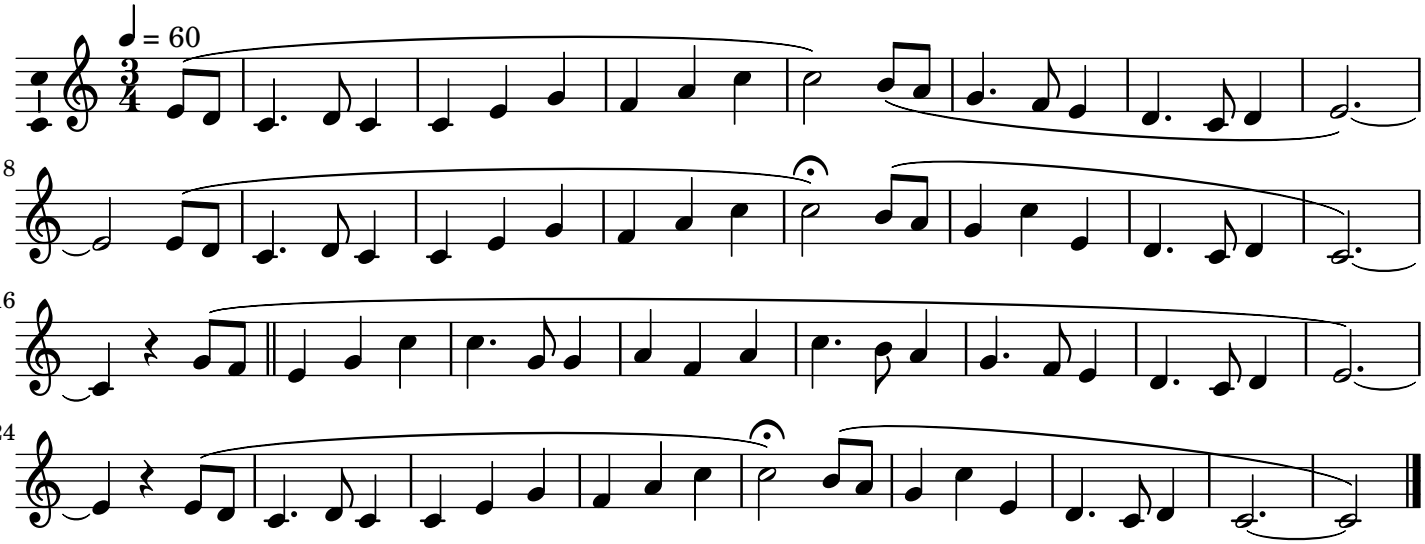
Exercise 1: Hard hearted indeed. (1666)



Exercise 2: Hear the ice cream truck? (1907)

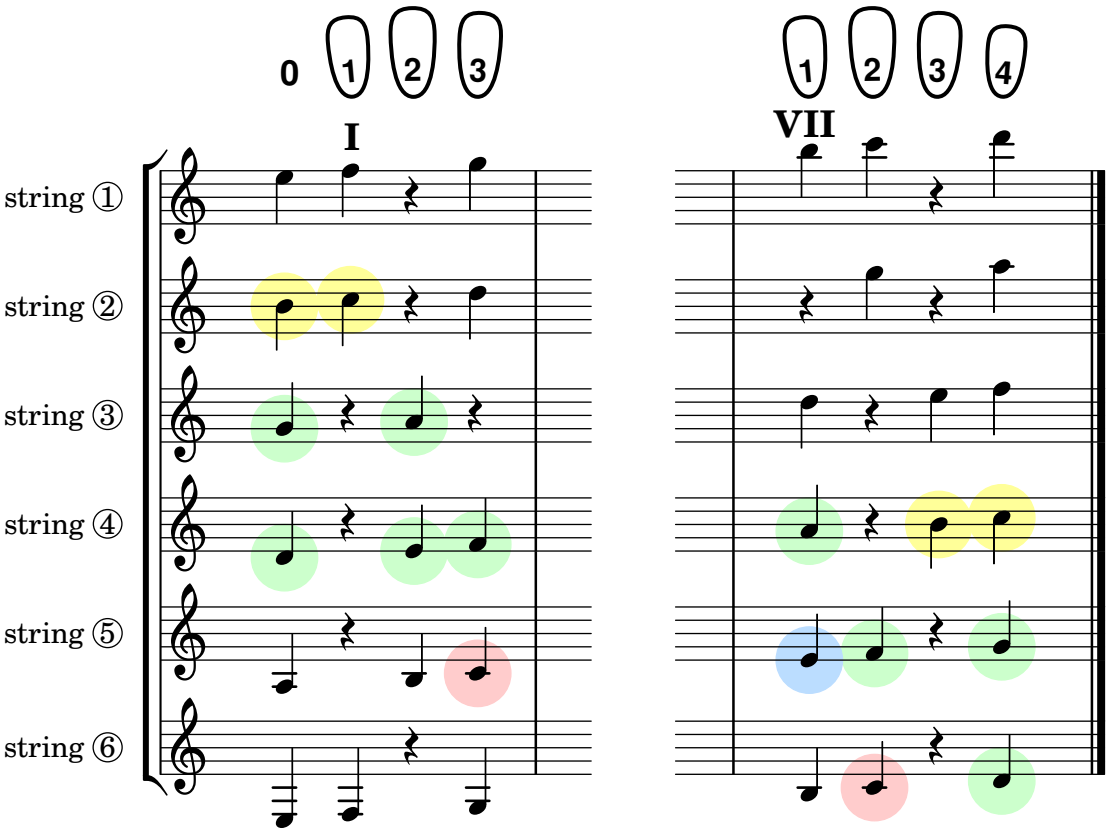


Exercise 3: Loves endures after charms are gone. (1808)



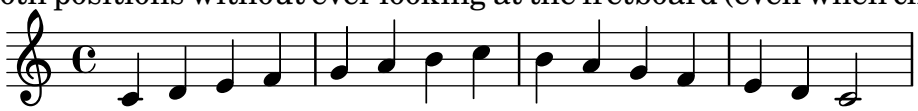
It's been a year since our first sightreading lesson (Jan2024.html) where we used a “musical fretboard diagram” like the one below to learn the same notes in two positions, starting with the two middle C's (red) and the special locator note (blue) to find seventh position without looking at the fretboard. We then added just enough notes (in green) to play five simple tunes.

Go back and re-read that first lesson about how to use the blue note, and why it's so important to learn each note in two positions when starting. That's an important lesson.



Our second lesson is easy; it adds just two more notes (in yellow above). The diagram shows how to finger them. In first position they're both on string ② beginning with the open string and then with the first finger. Now find seventh position by listening to the blue note. Both new notes will be on string ④ but played with fingers 3 and 4. See how that works? The rows match the strings and columns match the finger numbers at the top.

Those two notes complete the full octave starting at middle C. Test your learning by playing the scale below in both positions without ever looking at the fretboard (even when changing positions).



Now you're ready to play the exercises on the first page, in both positions, without looking at the fretboard. Each exercise uses all of the notes in this scale, making for a good memory workout.

This is an excerpt from “Beginning Fretboard Exercises”, which will be made available for free on IMSLP under a CC-BY license. Interested? Contact Jeff Olson at ***jjocanoe@gmail.com***

Exercise 1 . . . . . English(1666): Barbara Allen 1
Exercise 2 . . . . . Mills(1907): Red Wing 1
Exercise 3 . . . . . Moore(1808): Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms . . . 1