Reading Music

Some Tips and Tools for
Figuring Out a Piece of Music

- Find the Time Signature (Bottom number is the type of note that gets one beat; top number is how many beats per measure)
- Find the Tempo and set your metronome
- Find the "Fastest note" in the piece and set your metronome to this subdivision
 (Count in your head using this subdivision)
- Scan the piece looking for "Road Map" markings like repeat signs, 1st and 2nd endings, ect.
 (Highlight these markings to make them more noticeable)
- Look for all Dynamic markings in the piece
 (Highlight them with a different color)
- Read through the piece very slowly to find any measures that may be difficult
- Isolate these measures, practice them slowly, then play the measures before and after to work on transitions
- Play through the piece slowly like an actor memorizing his lines (A then AB then ABC, ect.)
- Switch to "Performance Mode" and play through the entire piece SLOWLY without stopping (Don't let mistakes stop your flow – just note them and keep playing)
- Start increasing the tempo (in increments of 5-10 bpm) to get to the desired tempo of the piece
- Now play it with heart and soul