

BIG BAND DRUMMING AT FIRST SIGHT

Big band drumming at first sight is an electrifying experience that captures the essence of jazz, swing, and big band music. It's a performance that seamlessly blends rhythm, timing, and showmanship, leaving audiences in awe. For both seasoned musicians and newcomers, witnessing big band drumming live offers a unique perspective into the artistry and precision required to keep a large ensemble swinging in harmony. In this article, we'll delve into the world of big band drumming—its history, key characteristics, essential techniques, and what makes it a captivating experience at first sight. Whether you're a budding drummer, a jazz enthusiast, or simply curious about this dynamic art form, understanding the fundamentals will deepen your appreciation for this vibrant musical genre.

The Evolution and Significance of Big Band Drumming

Historical Context of Big Band Music

Big band music emerged in the early 20th century, reaching its peak popularity during the Swing Era of the 1930s and 1940s. It was characterized by large ensembles, often comprising 12 to 25 musicians, including brass, woodwinds, rhythm section, and vocalists. The drummer played a pivotal role in establishing the groove and driving the energy of the band.

The Role of the Drummer in a Big Band

Unlike solo percussionists, big band drummers serve as the backbone of the ensemble, providing:

- Rhythmic foundation: Setting the tempo and maintaining pulse.
- Dynamic control: Modulating volume and intensity to match musical phrases.
- Accentuation: Emphasizing key hits and accents that shape the band's swing.
- Interaction: Collaborating with other rhythm section members and soloists for cohesive performance.

The drummer's ability to blend technical skill with musical sensitivity is what makes big band drumming at first sight both mesmerizing and inspiring.

Key Characteristics of Big Band Drumming

Rhythmic Complexity and Swing Feel

Big band drumming is distinguished by its swing feel—a rhythmic groove that emphasizes the "triplet" subdivision, creating a lilting, danceable rhythm. The drummer often employs:

- Shuffle and swing patterns: To evoke the authentic jazz swing.
- Syncopation: Incorporating off-beat accents that add excitement and complexity.
- Polyrhythms: Layering different rhythmic patterns for richness.

Use of Cymbals and Hi-Hats

The hi-hat and cymbals are crucial in shaping the overall sound. Common techniques include:

- Pulsating hi-hat patterns: Keeping time with steady eighth notes or swung patterns.
- Cymbal crashes: Marking transitions or emphasizing climaxes.
- Ride cymbal patterns: Providing a shimmering, sustained groove.

Specialized Techniques and Devices

Big band drummers often utilize advanced techniques such as: - Brush playing: Soft, sweeping sounds for ballads and intimate sections. - Rimshots: To produce a sharp attack and cut through the ensemble. - Ghost notes: Subtle hits on the snare for added texture. - Breaks and fills: Musical interjections that highlight solos or transitions.

Essential Equipment for Big Band Drumming

Core Drum Set Components

A typical big band drum kit includes: - Bass drum: Usually 22 inches, providing the heartbeat. - Snare drum: 14 inches, for crisp backbeats. - Toms: Usually mounted or floor toms for fills. - Hi-hat cymbals: For keeping time and accents. - Ride and crash cymbals: To shape dynamics and accents.

Additional Tools and Accessories

- Brushes: For soft, subtle playing. - Mallets: For unique tonal effects. - Metronome or click tracks: Sometimes used during rehearsals for precision.

Performing and Watching Big Band Drumming at First Sight

The Visual Impact of a Big Band Drummer

Watching a big band drummer live is a visual feast. Key aspects include: - Dynamic movements: The drummer's energetic and precise gestures. - Interaction with band members: Synchronizing with soloists and section leaders. - Use of accessories: Such as brushes or sticks, adding flair to the performance.

What to Observe During a Live Performance

To truly appreciate the craft, focus on: 1. Timing and Feel: How the drummer maintains a steady tempo amidst complex arrangements. 2. Technical Skill: Observation of technical mastery, from intricate fills to subtle ghost notes. 3. Musicality: How dynamics and accents are used to shape the music. 4. Communication: Non-verbal cues and coordination with band members.

The Artistic Skill Behind Big Band Drumming

Technical Mastery

Big band drummers must possess: - Excellent timing and sense of swing - Proficiency with various techniques (brushes, sticks, mallets) - Ability to read complex charts and improvise fills

Musical Sensitivity and Improvisation

While tightly arranged, big band drummers often improvise subtle fills and accents, responding to the soloists and the overall mood of the piece.

Stage Presence and Showmanship

Engaging visual performance enhances the experience. A skilled drummer uses: - Expressive gestures - Dynamic movements - Interaction with the audience and band

How to Experience Big Band Drumming at First Sight

Attending Live Performances

Nothing compares to witnessing big band drumming live. Look for: - Local jazz clubs - Music festivals featuring jazz ensembles - Special big band concerts in your area

Listening and Watching Recordings

For a deeper appreciation, explore: - Classic recordings like Count Basie Orchestra or Duke Ellington's bands - Live concert videos showcasing drummers like Buddy Rich or Gene Krupa

Joining Workshops and Masterclasses

Many professional drummers host workshops that demonstrate big band techniques, allowing fans and aspiring drummers to learn and observe.

Conclusion: The Magic of Big Band Drumming at First Sight

Experiencing big band drumming at first sight is a captivating journey into rhythm, technique, and showmanship. The precision and energy of the drummer set the tone for the entire ensemble, creating a dynamic and unforgettable spectacle. Whether you're watching a legendary performer or attending a local jazz concert, the visual and auditory elements combine to showcase the artistry involved in big band drumming. By understanding the history, techniques, and performance aspects, you can deepen your appreciation for this vibrant musical tradition. So, next time you encounter a big band live or through recordings, pay close attention to the drummer—the heartbeat of the ensemble—and enjoy the magic they bring to the stage.

Big Band Drumming at First Sight: An In-Depth Exploration The world of big band jazz is a mesmerizing tapestry of intricate arrangements, vibrant melodies, and dynamic rhythm sections. Among its most captivating components is the role of the drummer—a pivotal figure who anchors the ensemble, drives the tempo, and injects energy into every performance. When encountering big band drumming at first sight, one is immediately struck by the complexity, coordination, and sheer physicality involved. This article delves into the multifaceted nature of big band drumming, exploring its history, technique, instrumentation, and nuanced role within the ensemble.

The Historical Context of Big Band Drumming

Understanding big band drumming begins with appreciating its roots and evolution.

Origins and Evolution

- **Swing Era Foundations:** The big band jazz movement gained prominence in the 1930s and 1940s, with drummers like Chick Webb, Gene Krupa, and Buddy Rich pioneering the role of the modern jazz drummer. - **Rhythmic Innovations:** These pioneers introduced techniques such as the use of the hi-hat, intricate snare work,

and dynamic cymbal accents that became staples in big band arrangements. - Role Expansion: Drummers transitioned from mere timekeepers to active participants in musical conversation, often showcasing solos and improvisations.

Influential Big Band Drummers

- Gene Krupa: Known for his energetic style and revolutionary use of the drum set, Krupa's performances elevated the drum kit as a solo instrument. - Buddy Rich: Celebrated for his speed, technical mastery, and showmanship, Rich set a standard for drummers in big band settings. - Louie Bellson: Innovated with double bass drums and complex rhythmic patterns, expanding the sonic palette of big band drumming.

The Anatomy of a Big Band Drum Kit

The typical drum kit in a big band setting is tailored for versatility and projection.

Standard Components

- Bass Drum (Kick Drum): Usually 22-26 inches, providing the foundational pulse and punch. - Snare Drum: A 14-inch drum with a sharp, crisp sound essential for accents, backbeats, and rhythmic patterns. - Toms: Usually two to four tom-toms varying in size, used for fills and tonal variety. - Cymbals: Including hi-hats (14-inch), ride cymbals (20-inch), and crash cymbals for accents and dynamic emphasis. - Additional Accessories: Percussion instruments like cowbells, woodblocks, or auxiliary percussion may be integrated for special effects.

Setup and Space Considerations

- The kit is typically arranged to facilitate quick access to different instruments, allowing the drummer to switch between patterns seamlessly. - Large, open spaces in the big band stage setup enable the drummer's sound to project across the ensemble and audience.

Core Rhythmic Concepts in Big Band Drumming

Big band drumming demands technical precision, rhythmic diversity, and adaptability.

Timekeeping and Pulse

- The drummer's primary responsibility is maintaining a steady tempo, often marked by the ride cymbal pattern. - This "swing feel" involves a triplet-based subdivision, creating a lilting, propulsive groove.

Comping and accents

- "Comping" refers to the drummer's complementary patterns that support the horns and rhythm section. - Strategic use of cymbals and snare accents enhances musical phrases without overpowering the ensemble.

Fills and Transitions

- Drum fills are used to signal transitions, highlight solos, or build tension. - Fills in big band settings are often carefully orchestrated to complement the arrangement, ranging from simple tom rolls to complex, rapid-fire patterns.

Dynamic Range

- Big band drummers manipulate volume and intensity to match the mood—quiet brushes for ballads, powerful strikes for climaxes. - Proper dynamics ensure clarity and balance within a large ensemble.

Techniques and Performance Practices

Performing as a big band drummer demands mastery of various techniques.

Swing Feel and Subdivisions

- Mastery of the swing rhythm involves playing with a "long-short" triplet feel. - Consistent subdivision of beats (e.g., eighth notes, triplets) is crucial for maintaining groove.

Use of Cymbals

- The ride cymbal is the heartbeat of big band drumming, providing a steady pattern. - The hi-hat contributes to keeping time and adds accents. - Crash cymbals are used sparingly for emphasis during climaxes.

Dynamic Control

- Effective use of soft and loud passages enhances musical expression. - Brushes are often used for ballads or softer sections, requiring delicate control.

Coordination and Independence

- Drummers need to develop independence between limbs, often playing different patterns simultaneously. - For example, the right hand might play the ride pattern while the left hand composes snare accents.

Soloing and Improvisation

- Although primarily a timekeeper, prominent drummers in big bands often showcase solos. - Solo techniques include rapid fills, rhythmic innovations, and dynamic variations.

Role and Responsibilities within the Big Band

Big band drummers are more than just timekeepers—they are musical collaborators.

Maintaining the Rhythm Section

- The drummer, along with bassist, forms the backbone, ensuring the ensemble stays cohesive. - Precise timing and consistency are vital, especially during complex arrangements.

Interacting with Other Musicians

- Drummers listen and respond dynamically to soloists and arrangers. - They often cue transitions or special sections through visual cues and rhythmic signals.

Supporting Arrangements and Dynamics

- The drummer must interpret the conductor's cues and adjust volume, tempo, and accents accordingly. - They help shape the emotional contour of performances.

Providing Texture and Color

- Use of different percussion techniques and accessories adds variety. - For instance, employing brushes during ballads or adding auxiliary percussion for special effects.

Visual and Stage Presence

First sight of a big band drummer is often characterized by their energetic physicality.

Physicality and Movement

- Drummers often have vigorous, rhythmic movements, emphasizing their beats. - Gestures like arm swings, eye contact, and facial expressions communicate with band members and audience.

Showmanship

- Prominent drummers may incorporate theatrical elements, such as dramatic fills or dynamic gestures. - Their presence adds to the entertainment value of live performances.

Challenges and Mastery in Big Band Drumming

Achieving excellence in big band drumming requires overcoming specific challenges.

Technical Precision

- Managing complex arrangements with multiple cues and dynamic shifts. - Maintaining consistent swing feel across lengthy performances.

Balancing Power and Subtlety

- Navigating between projecting sound and providing nuanced support. - Avoiding overpowering the ensemble while ensuring clarity.

Adaptability

- Adjusting to different styles within the big band repertoire—swing, bebop, Latin influences. - Responding to live improvisations and spontaneous cues.

Endurance and Physicality

- Performing high-energy pieces demands physical stamina. - Proper technique and ergonomic setup help prevent fatigue and injury.

The Impact of Big Band Drumming on Jazz and Popular Music

Big band drumming has left an indelible mark on the evolution of jazz and beyond.

Innovative Rhythmic Ideas

- Techniques pioneered by early drummers influenced later styles like bebop, Latin jazz, and modern jazz fusion.

Visual and Cultural Influence

- The dynamic stage presence of big band drummers contributed to the spectacle of jazz concerts. - Their performances inspired generations of percussionists and rhythm section players.

Continuing Legacy

- Modern big bands and jazz orchestras continue to celebrate the craft, with drummers like Peter Erskine and Antonio Sanchez advancing the tradition. - Educational programs emphasize the importance of big band drumming techniques and history.

Conclusion: The First Sight Experience

Encountering big band drumming at first sight is a visually and audibly stimulating experience. The drummer's vigorous movements, complex coordination, and commanding presence combine to create a captivating spectacle. Beyond mere technical prowess, the big band drummer embodies the spirit of jazz—improvisation, rhythm, and collective expression. Whether in a grand concert hall or a lively jazz club, witnessing a big band drummer in action offers an inspiring window into the heart of jazz music's rhythmic soul. In essence, big band drumming is a rich, multifaceted art form that blends technical mastery, musical sensitivity, and showmanship. Its importance within the ensemble is unparalleled, shaping the character and energy of the entire performance. For those encountering it for the first time, it is a powerful reminder of the profound impact rhythm has in music—and how vital the drummer's role truly is.

For many readers, encountering Big Band Drumming At First Sight is not always a planned event. Sometimes it begins with a question, a task, or a moment of curiosity that appears unexpectedly. Having the ability to access the material immediately changes how that curiosity is handled.

Instead of postponing learning, readers can respond in the moment. A single chapter may answer a pressing question, while another section sparks ideas that unfold gradually. This immediacy strengthens the connection between curiosity and understanding.

Reading no longer feels like a formal activity that requires preparation. It blends naturally into daily life—during quiet mornings, between responsibilities, or at the end of a long day. This flexibility encourages consistency without forcing rigid routines.

The structure of PDF books supports this rhythm well. Pages remain familiar each time they are opened. Headings guide attention, and visual elements help anchor ideas. Over time, readers develop an intuitive sense of where information is located.

Annotation tools turn reading into dialogue. Notes capture reactions, disagreements, and insights that emerge during reflection. These personal markers make returning to the text more meaningful, as the reader

encounters their own evolving perspective.

Search functions simplify complex exploration. Instead of rereading entire sections, readers can locate specific ideas efficiently. This practical advantage makes the book useful beyond initial reading, especially for reference and revision.

Trustworthy sources matter. Platforms that prioritize legality and accuracy create confidence in the material. Readers can focus fully on understanding without questioning reliability or safety.

Access without excessive cost opens doors. When financial pressure is removed, exploration becomes more adventurous. Readers feel free to explore unfamiliar topics, knowing that curiosity does not come with unnecessary risk.

Students benefit from this freedom. Learning extends beyond classrooms and deadlines. Concepts can be revisited calmly, reinforced through repetition, and connected across subjects without urgency.

Professionals approach Big Band Drumming At First Sight with a different lens. They seek relevance, clarity, and applicability. Being able to return to specific sections when challenges arise turns reading into a practical resource rather than a one-time activity.

Personal growth often happens quietly. Reading becomes a companion rather than an obligation. Ideas settle gradually, influencing thinking and decision-making over time.

Accessibility features ensure broader participation. Adjustable displays and supportive reading tools help accommodate different needs, allowing more readers to engage comfortably.

Organization enhances continuity. Files remain available, categorized, and easy to retrieve. Progress is never lost, even when reading is paused for weeks or months.

The global nature of access adds another layer. Readers across different cultures encounter the same material, often interpreting it through unique experiences. This shared access strengthens collective understanding.

Revisiting familiar passages often reveals new insights. What once felt complex may later feel clear. Growth becomes visible through repeated engagement rather than rushed completion.

With Big Band Drumming At First Sight readily available, learning becomes less about finishing and more about returning. The book remains present, patient, and ready whenever attention shifts back.

This steady availability encourages a calmer relationship with knowledge. There is no pressure to absorb everything at once. Understanding unfolds naturally, shaped by time and reflection.

In this way, reading becomes less transactional and more personal. The value lies not only in information gained, but in the habit of thoughtful engagement that develops along the way.

Questions & Answers About big band drumming at first sight

No	Question	Answer
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1	What is the significance of 'First Sight' in the context of big band drumming?	'First Sight' is a notable track that showcases the dynamic and intricate drumming styles within big band jazz, highlighting the drummer's ability to set the mood and drive the rhythm from the outset.
2	How does big band drumming differ in 'First Sight' compared to other jazz styles?	In 'First Sight', big band drumming emphasizes powerful, synchronized rhythms, dynamic fills, and a focus on supporting the ensemble's brass and reed sections, contrasting with the more improvisational and subtle approach in smaller jazz combos.
3	Who are the prominent drummers known for their performances in 'First Sight' or similar big band arrangements?	Notable drummers include Buddy Rich, Gene Krupa, and Mel Lewis, all of whom have contributed significantly to the flavor and energy of big band drumming exemplified in tracks like 'First Sight.'
4	What are some key drumming techniques used in 'First Sight' to create its energetic feel?	Techniques include high-volume swing patterns, dynamic accents, synchronized cymbal crashes, and complex fills that complement the brass riffs, all contributing to the vibrant, lively atmosphere.
5	How does the drum intro in 'First Sight' set the tone for the entire piece?	The drum intro typically features a bold, rhythmic motif that establishes the tempo and energy, immediately engaging listeners and signaling the lively, danceable style characteristic of big band jazz.
6	What role does the drummer play in the arrangement and performance of 'First Sight'?	The drummer provides the foundation of the rhythm section, driving the tempo, adding dynamic accents, and interacting with soloists and sections to create a cohesive and compelling performance.
7	Are there any modern reinterpretations of 'First Sight' focusing on big band drumming styles?	Yes, contemporary jazz ensembles and drummers often reinterpret 'First Sight' by incorporating modern techniques, electronic elements, and improvisational flair while maintaining the energetic spirit of traditional big band drumming.
8	What should aspiring big band drummers focus on to master the style exemplified in 'First Sight'?	Aspiring drummers should focus on developing strong swing timing, dynamic control, precise synchronization with the band, and the ability to execute expressive fills that enhance the musical narrative.
9	How has 'First Sight' influenced the evolution of big band drumming in jazz history?	'First Sight' exemplifies the powerful, rhythmic driving force of big band drumming, inspiring generations of drummers to prioritize energy, technical skill, and musicality within large ensemble settings.

big band drumming, jazz drumming, swing rhythm, big band percussion, jazz ensemble, drum kit, jazz harmony, jazz performance, rhythm section, jazz improvisation

Big Band Drumming At First Sight

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Tips for reading Big Band Drumming At First Sight

Reading Big Band Drumming At First Sight in digital format can be a highly effective and enjoyable experience when done with the right approach. Unlike traditional printed books, digital reading offers flexibility, customization, and powerful tools that can improve comprehension and retention. However, without proper habits, digital reading can also lead to fatigue or reduced focus. Applying practical reading strategies helps you get the most value from Big Band Drumming At First Sight.

One of the most important tips is to break your reading into manageable sessions. Long, uninterrupted reading on a screen can strain the eyes and reduce concentration. Instead of reading for several hours at once, divide your time into shorter sessions with regular breaks. This approach helps maintain focus, improves understanding, and prevents mental exhaustion. Using techniques such as the Pomodoro method—reading for 25–30 minutes followed by a short break—can be particularly effective.

Using bookmarks is another simple yet powerful habit. Most digital reading platforms allow you to bookmark chapters, sections, or specific pages. Bookmarks make it easy to return to important parts of Big Band Drumming At First Sight without scrolling or searching manually. This is especially useful for long documents, study materials, or reference-based reading where you may need to revisit certain sections frequently.

Highlighting key points and adding annotations can significantly improve comprehension. Digital highlights allow you to visually mark important ideas, definitions, or summaries. Adding notes in your own words helps reinforce understanding and creates a personalized study guide. Over time, these highlights and annotations turn Big Band Drumming At First Sight into an interactive learning resource rather than passive reading material.

Adjusting screen settings plays a crucial role in reading comfort. Most reading apps allow you to customize font size, font style, line spacing, and background color. Increasing font size and line spacing can reduce eye strain, while using dark mode or sepia backgrounds may improve readability in low-light environments. Adjusting screen brightness to match ambient lighting further enhances comfort and protects eye health during long reading sessions.

Creating a focused reading environment

A distraction-free environment improves reading efficiency and enjoyment. When reading Big Band Drumming At First Sight, try to minimize notifications from messaging apps or social media. Many devices offer “focus mode” or “do not disturb” settings that help maintain concentration. Choosing a quiet, comfortable location with proper lighting also contributes to a better reading experience.

For study or professional reading, setting clear goals before starting can be beneficial. Decide whether you are reading for general understanding, detailed analysis, or quick reference. Clear objectives help guide how deeply you engage with the content and which sections deserve closer attention.

Access Formats

Big Band Drumming At First Sight is often available in multiple formats, each offering unique advantages. Understanding these formats helps you choose the one that best matches your preferences, devices, and reading habits.

PDF format:

PDF is one of the most common formats for Big Band Drumming At First Sight. It preserves the original layout, fonts, and images, ensuring consistency across devices. PDFs are ideal for documents with structured layouts, charts, or academic formatting. They work well on computers and tablets but may require zooming on smaller screens. Annotation and highlighting tools are widely supported in PDF readers, making this format suitable for study and professional use.

ePub format:

ePub is a flexible and reflowable format designed for eReaders and mobile devices. Text automatically adjusts to different screen sizes, allowing comfortable reading on smartphones and dedicated eReaders. If you prioritize readability and customization, ePub is often the best choice for reading Big Band Drumming At First Sight on the go. However, complex layouts may not always appear exactly as intended.

Audiobook format:

Audiobooks offer an alternative way to experience Big Band Drumming At First Sight content. Instead of reading text, users listen to narrated versions. Audiobooks are ideal for multitasking, commuting, or users who prefer auditory learning. While they do not allow highlighting or visual reference, they provide accessibility and convenience for busy lifestyles.

Selecting the right format depends on your device, reading goals, and personal preferences. Many readers combine multiple formats—for example, reading the PDF for detailed study and listening to the audiobook for review or reinforcement.

Benefits of Digital Copies

Digital copies of Big Band Drumming At First Sight offer several advantages over traditional printed books, making them increasingly popular among modern readers. One of the most significant benefits is portability. Hundreds or even thousands of digital books can be stored on a single device, eliminating the need for physical storage space and making it easy to carry an entire library anywhere.

Searchable text is another major advantage. Instead of flipping through pages, digital readers can instantly search for keywords, phrases, or topics within Big Band Drumming At First Sight. This feature is invaluable for research, study, and professional reference, saving time and improving efficiency.

Offline access enhances flexibility. Once downloaded, digital copies of Big Band Drumming At First Sight can be accessed without an internet connection. This is especially useful for travel, remote study, or areas with limited connectivity. Offline access ensures uninterrupted reading regardless of location.

Annotation tools add further value. Highlights, notes, and bookmarks transform digital reading into an interactive experience. These tools help readers organize information, revisit important sections, and personalize their learning process. Notes can often be exported or synced across devices, providing continuity and convenience.

Cost and sustainability advantages

Digital copies are often more affordable than printed books. Many platforms offer discounts, subscription models, or free access to public domain works. Over time, digital reading can significantly reduce costs for students, professionals, and avid readers.

From an environmental perspective, digital books reduce paper consumption, printing, and transportation. Choosing digital versions of *Big Band Drumming At First Sight* contributes to more sustainable reading habits and a smaller environmental footprint.

Accessibility and inclusivity

Digital reading platforms often include accessibility features that benefit a wide range of users. Adjustable fonts, text-to-speech options, screen reader compatibility, and contrast settings make *Big Band Drumming At First Sight* more accessible to readers with visual impairments or learning differences. These features help ensure that knowledge is available to a broader audience.

Balancing digital and traditional reading

While digital copies offer many benefits, balancing them with healthy reading habits is important. Taking regular breaks, maintaining good posture, and limiting screen exposure before bedtime help prevent fatigue and eye strain. Some readers choose to alternate between digital and printed formats depending on the context and purpose of reading.

Building a long-term reading habit

Consistency is key to getting the most value from *Big Band Drumming At First Sight*. Setting a regular reading schedule, even for a short daily session, helps build a sustainable habit. Tracking progress using reading apps or journals can increase motivation and provide a sense of achievement.

Final thoughts on reading *Big Band Drumming At First Sight*

Reading *Big Band Drumming At First Sight* digitally offers flexibility, efficiency, and powerful tools that enhance understanding and engagement. By applying effective reading strategies, choosing the right format, and taking advantage of digital features, readers can create a comfortable and productive reading experience. Whether for learning, professional growth, or personal enjoyment, digital copies of *Big Band Drumming At First Sight* provide a modern and accessible way to consume structured knowledge anytime and anywhere.