

# Mozart (1756-1791)

## Rondo Alla Turca



Learn this masterpiece by one of the greatest composers of all time, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. **Bridget Mermikides** is your guide...

### ABILITY RATING

● ● ● ● ● Advanced

INFO	WILL IMPROVE YOUR
<b>KEY:</b> Am	✓ Technique and stamina
<b>TEMPO:</b> 122bpm	✓ Articulation
<b>CD:</b> TRACK 17	✓ Fretting hand legatos


THIS MONTH'S CLASSICAL guitar piece is a transcription of the last movement of Mozart's Piano Sonata no. 11 in A major: Alla Turca. Popularly known as the Turkish Rondo, it is believed to have been written somewhere between 1778 and 1783 and is often heard on its own as one of Mozart's best-known piano pieces.

The term 'rondo' describes a specific type of musical form, a fast energetic piece often featuring music of a popular or folk character. In this case, the Rondo Alla Turca is a March in 2/4 imitating the sound of Turkish Janissary bands, the music of which was in vogue at that time.

The form of a rondo consists of a main theme at the start, which repeats and



this way can be helpful in terms of practising and memorising as it breaks the piece down into clear sections on which to focus. Being originally written for piano, this piece needs a fair amount of modifying to make it physically possible for solo guitar. The transcription here is one solution and it maintains the melody in full while outlining the essential harmony in the bass notes.

All the fingering in our transcription is designed to help you achieve maximum technical ease and fluency and therefore a musical sounding rendition of the piece. The fretting hand fingering is shown with numbers by the note heads. Enjoy! 

“ Understanding the form can be helpful in terms of practising and memorising the piece ”

### TECHNIQUE FOCUS

#### PATIENCE GAINS STAMINA

This is a very demanding piece requiring a high standard of technique and a good deal of experience with classical guitar playing. Practise slowly and patiently, one section at a time. Then gradually piece it all together, developing stamina as you go. Take time to get it right and enjoy the process!

alternates with contrasting themes called episodes. If the main theme is called A and episodes are called B and C, a typical form might often be symmetrical and could look like this: ABACABA.

Rondo Alla Turca consists of a main theme, three contrasting episodes and a coda (ending). The form is as follows: ABAC DC ABAC + coda. The last C is slightly elaborated and the coda consists of new material based on elements of the main theme. Understanding the form in

### GET THE TONE



Clarity is key! Ensure your nails are filed and pick between soundhole and bridge. I used a Ken Leftwich guitar recorded with AKG 414 mics into Logic Pro 9 on Apple Mac Pro with Apogee Ensemble sound card. Reverb was Altiverb 6 AU plug-in. Above setting are an amp guide only.



**TRACK RECORD** Being very famous and popular, there are countless versions of Rondo Alla Turca on YouTube and on CD. Ones to check out include classical guitarist William Kanengiser, the Polish duo Los Desperados and a superb eight-finger tapping version by pARTyzanT on a double-neck guitar. The Dave Brubeck Quartet also did a jazzed-up version called Blue Rondo Alla Turk as the B-side of their hit Take Five.



PLAYING TIPS

CD TRACK 17

**[Bar 4]** There's a tricky shift from fourth to third position on every half beat. A slight rotation of the fretting hand wrist is needed to grab the C bass note and a quick rotation back to catch the melody note B. A lightness of touch with tidy slurs is needed to gain fluency here. Practise

slowly at first until the technique is good enough for speed to develop. **[Bar 6]** A relaxed half barre on the side of the first finger can help with the fretting hand extension, can make the hand feel more stable and helps to prepare for the five-string barre (bar 8).

**A**

1, 10

m i m p m p i m i m p i m i m a a m i

**B**

6, 15

i a a a i a p m p m p a p a m a m p

**19, 36**

21, 38

**A**

27, 44

**C**

33, 50

53, 62

a i a i a p

## PLAYING TIPS

## CD TRACK 4

**[Bar 20]** Using the first and fourth fretting hand fingers on the first and second strings for the shifting thirds helps to create a square fretting hand with knuckles parallel to the fretboard, setting up the hand to achieve a good barre at the 3rd fret. When executing the pull-off (A to G) half way through bar 20, use the first finger barre but only leaning on the

part of the finger needed to press the first string; the tip should be then poised ready to grab the G in the next bar.  
**[Bar 34]** The second beat leading into the cadence is played as an appoggiatura making it sound like four 16th notes. The next section is in octaves. Prepare the barre on beat 2 of bar 55 so it's ready to use at 56.



56, 65

a a a a a a  
p p p m p p

a a a a a  
p m i p p p

71, 80

m i m i p i m i p i m i m i m i m i m i m

76, 85

i m i m i m i m i p i m i m i p i m i a i p

89, 106

90, 107

95, 112



**[Bar 71 onwards]** This section contains picking hand fingering to help with string crossing issues and to help maintain picking hand alternation. The use of an open first string in bar 77 is to help keep a resonant and un-chopped melody line while shifting position, though this E can also be played on the second string.

**[Bars 193 to 201]** This section appears now in broken octaves; again use picking hand fingers 'i' and 'a' as indicated.

**[Bar 210]** Place down a first finger barre across four strings on the second beat to prepare for the barre chord (A) in bar 211. Strum this chord straight down with thumb.

145, 154

**B**

159, 176

## PLAYING TIPS

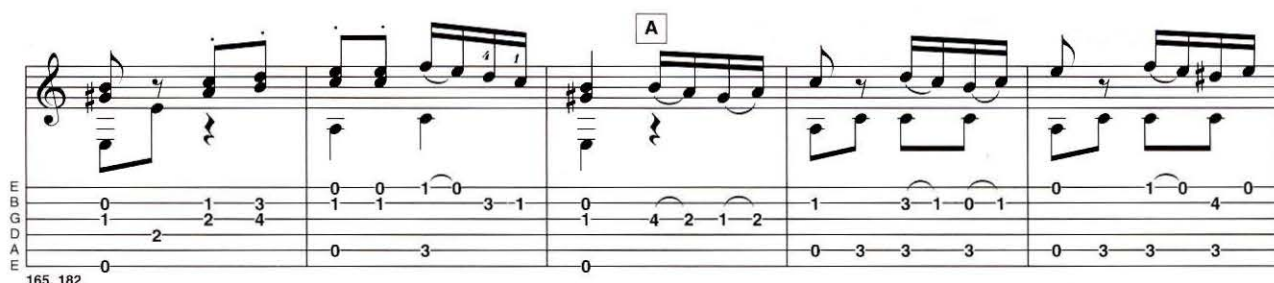
## CD TRACK 4

**[Bar 213]** Fret the top two strings here and keep intact when shifting to the 10th fretted D chord in the next bar. The melody notes in bar 213 include a picking hand repeated first finger; the first 'i' (D to C# pull-off) is to be played rest stroke so the first finger lands on the second string, and the second 'i' (B on the second string) is played free stroke, plucking

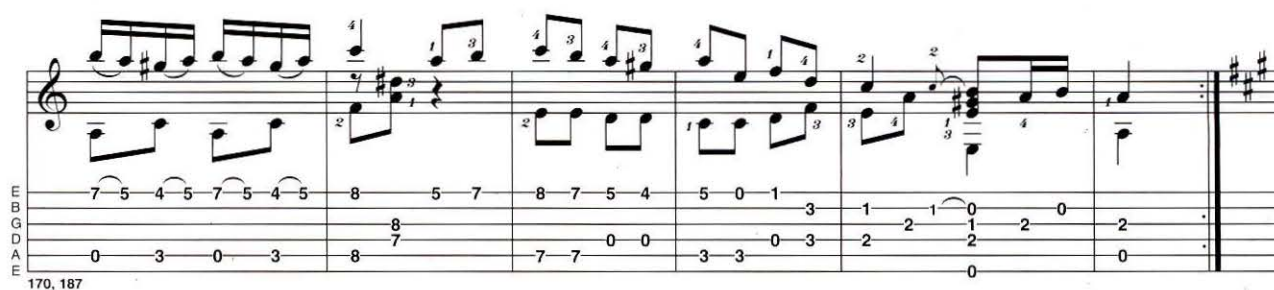
free of its adjacent lower string. This is a common and acceptable way of repeating a picking hand finger. It is the classical style equivalent to economy picking.

**[Bar 216]** There is a fretting hand extension here in order to reach up for the high E and maintain a good connection with the melody line. »

**A**

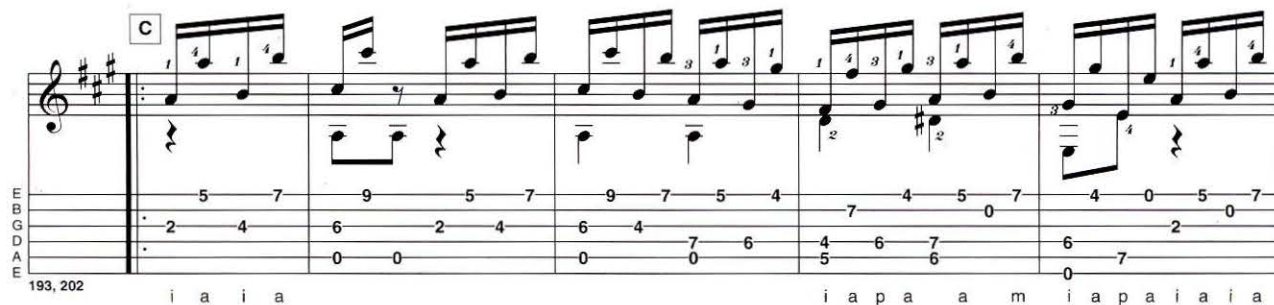


165, 182



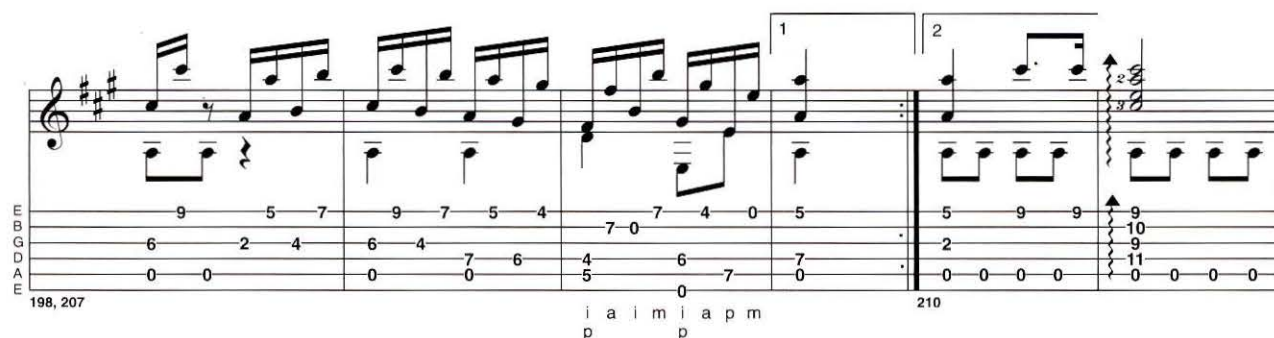
170, 187

**C**



193, 202

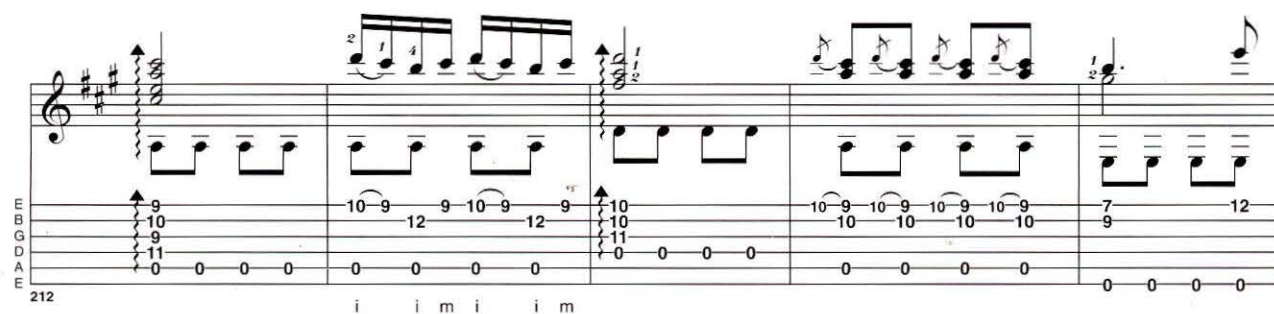
i a i a i a p a a m i a p a i a i a



198, 207

i a i m i a p m

210



212

i i m i i m



## CD TRACK 17

Once you're holding the E, prepare the following chord shape (A) immediately in the air above the strings (holding the fourth fingered E until the last moment) so the chord can land as accurately as possible.  
**[Bars 223 to 225]** These tricky 16th notes introduce the picking hand thumb (p) because the thumb alternating with the first finger can usually

gather more momentum than arpeggiating with the fingers alone.  
**[Bars 236 to 241]** The octaves here should be played with 'l' and 'a' in the picking hand and the ending chords strummed straight down again with the thumb.

217

222

a m i m i p i m i p i p i p i

226

a m i m a i a i a m i m

231

236