

Pyotr Tchaikovsky

Scène from Swan Lake (Op.20, No.10)



Bridget Mermikides returns to the work of the Russian great, Tchaikovsky, to arrange and transcribe this famous theme from the equally famous ballet, Swan Lake.

ABILITY RATING



Moderate

| INFO | WILL IMPROVE YOUR |
|------------------------|---|
| KEY: Em | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Melodic phrasing |
| TEMPO: Various | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Romantic repertoire |
| CD: TRACK 28-29 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Melody with chords |

THIS ISSUE MARKS a return to the music of the phenomenal Russian composer Pyotr Tchaikovsky (1840-1893), whose Dance Of The Sugar Plum Fairy I arranged back in GT192. Tchaikovsky had an incredible talent for composing widely accessible, technically astonishing and perfectly judged evocative themes for orchestral works and the ballet. In fact, his ballet works have a life beyond their functional origins, and include among them the most loved and recognisable melodies in 'classical' music.

In this article, I've arranged the stunning theme Act 2 No.10 from the ballet Swan Lake composed from 1875-76. The ballet – adapted from Russian folk tales – enacts the story of Princess Odette (who takes the lead ballerina role) who has been transformed to a swan by a sorcerer, with a deeply tragic romantic conclusion. The opening of Act 2 depicts the other protagonist, Siegfried, hunting for swan in a moonlit forest clearing, and finding Odette – whose true identity as a beautiful young girl trapped in the vision of a swan is revealed to him. Tchaikovsky's accompanying music (Act 2, No.10 Scène – Lake in the Moonlight (Moderato), also known simply as Scène) is both romantic and

dramatic, perfectly capturing a swan-like elegance, a dark sorcery and a deep love doomed to tragedy.

This theme is an evergreen favourite for classical music lovers and the general public, and is often played as an orchestral work in its own right. You have also doubtless heard it in numerous films and TV shows, such as the moving last scene of *Billy Elliot* (although the performance starts with Act II, for reasons of artistic licence!) As always, reducing an orchestral work down to six strings and two

USING YOUR NAILS

Classical guitarists pluck the strings using the fingernails. These need to be kept shortish -1-2mm above the fingertip - and shaped correctly, so that they create a good plucking action and the best possible tone. Every serious player keeps a variety of nail files and buffers – a big favourite is very fine wet and dry sanding paper. This is used to smooth off the edges of the nails and keep them buffed to a fine polish. The better the nails, the better the tone!

hands is a challenge, but Tchaikovsky's melodic writing is so powerful that it translates very well.

I've transposed the original key of B Minor down a 5th to E Minor, to utilise the range and open strings of the guitar more idiomatically, and captured the orchestral gestures as best as possible with arpeggios (and from bar 48, the use of the tremolo technique) to mimic the tremolando used by the orchestral bowed strings.

As ever, take your time to get the various techniques under your fingers, referring to the tab captions for the trickier sections.

You'll want to have a technical fluency when coming to perform this, as the piece requires a fluid and expressive control of tempo for it to sound its best. ■

“I've transposed the original key of Bm down a 5th to Em to utilise the range and open strings of the guitar.”

NEXT MONTH: Bridget arranges a section from Bizet's *Carmen*



TRACK RECORD There are many powerful recordings of Swan Lake, but you can do far worse than the 2004 remastered EMI Classics two-CD set of Sawallisch and the Philadelphia Orchestra. For a more contemporary recording of Scène, among other stunning ballet favourites, check out a collection such as Tchaikovsky: Ballet Suites (Berliner Philharmoniker 1996 Deutsche Grammophon).



Tchaikovsky:
one of the
all-time great
composers

[Bar 2] After the first chord, the famous melody begins right away in bar 2. I've had to simplify the orchestral harp arpeggio accompaniment a lot to make it playable on the guitar. However, the harmony is still intact, and the main focus needs to be on the tune, so bring out that top line with rest strokes where possible. There is some indicated fingering for both hands for the first couple of bars to get you started; after that, the same kind of

technique should be used throughout. On beat 3 of bar 2, hold the C chord as long as physically possible so it sustains under melody. The same applies on beat 3 of bar 4 with the C7 chord – this same principle should be used throughout the piece wherever there is a minim (two-beat note or chord) in the accompaniment.

[Bar 13] A full barre is needed for the F# chord, and again at 17 for the F chord.

J = 75

Em C Em C7 Em C

E: 0 7 0 0 2 3 5 7 0 3 0 1 3 0 5 3 2
 B: 0 0 0 1 0 8 0 8 0 3 0 1 0 0 1 0
 G: 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 3 0 0 0 0 0 0
 D: 2 0 2 0 0 7 0 7 0 3 0 2 0 2 0 0
 A: 2 0 2 3 0 7 0 7 0 3 0 2 0 2 3 0
 E: 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

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

Em C Em C7 B7 13 9 Em

E: 7 0 0 2 3 5 7 0 8 7 0 8 0 0 3 0 1 3 0 0 0 0
 B: 0 0 0 1 0 0 0 7 0 0 7 0 0 3 0 2 0 0 2 0 2 0
 G: 0
 D: 7 3 0 7 0 7 0 7 0 3 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2
 A: 0

6

D Am/C Bm Am C/G F# Em/B D Am/C

E: 0 2 0 1 3 4 5 0 1 3 1 3 1 3 0 2 0 0 2 0 1
 B: 0 0 0 0 4 4 0 2 2 2 0 2 4 2 4 0 2 0 2 0 1
 G: 0 0 0 0 4 4 0 2 2 2 0 2 4 2 4 0 2 0 2 0 1
 D: 4 4 0 3 2 2 0 0 3 2 0 2 4 2 4 0 3 2 0 2 0 1
 A: 5 3 2 2 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

10

Bm Am C7/G F F7/E F#/C# B

E: 3 0 1 3 1 0 1 3 1 3 0 1 1 1 2 2 2 0 0 0
 B: 4 5 0 2 2 3 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 4 3 4 4 4 0 0 0
 G: 4 4 0 2 2 3 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 4 3 4 4 4 4 0 0 0
 D: 2 2 0 0 3 1 1 3 1 3 1 2 2 4 2 4 4 4 4 0 0 0
 A: 2 0 0 0 3 1 1 3 1 3 1 2 2 4 2 4 4 4 4 0 0 0

15

[Bar 19] Here the famous main theme is repeated – in the original version it's much more fully orchestrated at this point, so can be played more

dramatically than at the start. While the guitar can't recreate an orchestra's size and power, it has its own dynamics and we must capitalise on these.

Em C Em C7 B7 13 9 Em

E B G D A E
0 0 0 0 0 0
0 0 0 0 0 0
0 0 0 0 0 0
0 0 0 0 0 0
0 0 0 0 0 0
19

C Em C7 B7 13 9 Em

E B G D A E
0 0 0 0 0 0
0 0 0 0 0 0
0 0 0 0 0 0
0 0 0 0 0 0
0 0 0 0 0 0
23

D Am/C Bm Am C/G F# Em/B D Am/C

E B G D A E
0 2 0 1 3 0 1 3 0 2 0 0 2 0 1
4 4 5 2 2 2 0 2 3 4 3 0 4 2 4 5 3 2
5 3 2 0 3 0 3 2 2 4 2 0 5 3 0 2 0 1
27

Bm Am C7/G F# Am B Am F# Am

E B G D A E
3 5 0 1 3 1 2 3 1 3 0 1 1 0 0 4 4 1 0 4 4 2 2 1 1 1 0 0
4 4 2 0 2 1 0 2 1 0 4 4 2 0 2 1 1 1 0 0
2 0 3 2 1 0 1 0 2 0 2 1 0 1 1 0 0
3 2 1 0 3 1 0 1 0 2 1 0 1 1 0 0
2 1 0 3 2 1 0 1 0 2 1 0 1 1 0 0
1 0 1 1 0 0 1 0 1 1 1 0 0
32

[Bar 34] The piece changes gear into crotchet triplets and begins to build in intensity until it hits the tremolo at bar 48. There is a gradual accelerando through this section, and a faster tempo is maintained until around bar 60,

where it calms and slows down until the end. There is plenty of room for expressive rubato in this piece, so do listen to the recommended orchestral recordings for inspiration!

37

42

46

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

49

The image shows a musical score for guitar. The top part is a standard staff notation with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature. It features a series of eighth-note patterns and rests. The bottom part is a tablature for a six-string guitar, showing the fingerings and positions for each note. The strings are labeled E, B, G, D, A, E from top to bottom. The tablature corresponds to the music above, providing a visual guide for playing the piece.

The image shows a musical score for a six-string guitar. The top half contains a staff with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature. It features a melodic line with various note heads and stems. A brace connects the first two measures. The bottom half provides the corresponding tablature, with each string labeled E, B, G, D, A, E from top to bottom. The tablature shows fingerings (e.g., 3, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0) and positions along the six strings.

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Edvard Grieg Solveig's Song



This month **Bridget Mermikides** creates a simple but lyrically beautiful arrangement of a piece from Grieg's magnum opus, The Peer Gynt Suite.

ABILITY RATING



Moderate

INFO

KEY: E minor

- Single line melody playing
- Bass-melody separation
- Repertoire of romantic works

TEMPO: 72 bpm

CD: TRACKS 28-29

THIS MONTH WE return to the work of the Norwegian Romantic composer Edvard Grieg (1843-1907). Grieg adopted many Norwegian folk music elements and blended them with the prevailing 19th century style, and as such is an excellent example of a 'nationalistic' composer. He also happens to be one of the first composers to have their work recorded in their lifetimes, and in fact archive audio recordings exist of him playing the piano.

The folk elements in Grieg's music give it a very lyrical and rustic quality. It's also highly programmatic and accessible, which explains its extensive use in TV and film. Here I've arranged a piece from Grieg's incidental music composed from 1874-76 for Henrik Ibsen's play, Peer Gynt.

Solveig's Song is from Act IV of the play, and the last piece of the Peer Gynt Suite No.2 – a set of

I've transposed the piece from the original key of A minor down a 4th to E minor, so it sits better on the guitar.

instrumental works drawn from the incidental music to work as independent – and hugely popular – concert material. In the lyrics, the character Solveig sings about her lover, Peer Gynt – who has abandoned her – and declares that she will wait for him and be reunited, even if only in heaven. The melancholy nature of the lyrics is echoed in the beautiful melody built mainly on a minor scale.

I've transposed the piece from the original

Edvard Grieg
in an 1888
London photo
portrait



TECHNIQUE FOCUS SITTING POSTURE

An important aspect of technique in classical guitar playing is adopting the correct sitting posture. The guitar is placed on the left thigh (for right-handed players), which is raised by placing the foot on a footstool. The left knee should be pointing forwards and the right knee to the side so the guitar rests on the inside of the right thigh. The guitar should be positioned at an angle where the neck is pointing slightly upwards, and the right forearm rests on the larger bout of the instrument. This should hold the instrument securely in place and provide ease of facility for both hands.

key of A minor down a 4th to E minor (and down from A major to E major during the waltz sections which modulate to the parallel major scale) so that it sits better on the guitar. Although some of the orchestral parts have been dropped, due to practical considerations, I hope I've managed to retain much of the character of the piece, due to the pastoral simplicity and phrasing of the melody which appears in single-line form in the introduction and conclusion.

Although this is one of the easier pieces in this classical series, it's also one of the most beautiful. As ever, patience is the fastest way to success; and remember, there's no limit to how expressively even the simplest melody can be performed. So take your time getting the piece perfectly under your fingers, and use the tab captions to help with some of the techniques. I hope you enjoy learning and playing this wonderful tune! ■

NEXT MONTH: Bridget arranges and tabs Albeniz's *Granada*



TRACK RECORD The Peer Gynt Suites, performed by Berlin Philharmonic and conducted by Herbert von Karajan (1983, Deutsche Grammophon) is a good reference point from which to learn the piece; for a version with the melody sung, check out the Estonian National Symphony Orchestra with Paavo Järvi conducting and soprano Camilla Tilling singing with ethereal beauty: Peer Gynt Grieg (2005, Warner Classics).

PLAYING TIPS

CD TRACK 29

[Bars 1-6] The opening six bars consist of a single line melody emulating the unison orchestral strings. Play as smoothly and legato as possible adding a little glissando between each of the two notes in bars 4, 5 and 6.

[Bar 8] The bass note and chords at bar 8 set the mood for the melody, which

begins on the last beat of bar 9. From here on try sticking to the suggested fretting – a four-string barre is needed on the last beat of bar 10. Keep an ear on the sound of the melody notes and keep their volume and tone consistent. In addition, aim to shape the melody musically as a singer would.

The sheet music consists of five staves of musical notation for guitar, with each staff featuring a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a tempo of 72 BPM. The first staff (measures 1-6) shows a single line melody with fingerings 4-5, 9-11, 11-9, 7, 8-10, 7-12, and 4-9. The second staff (measures 6-10) includes a bass line and chords Em, B, G, B5, and B. The third staff (measures 11-15) features a more complex melody with chords Em, Em/G, B, Em, D, and G. The fourth staff (measures 15-19) includes a bass line and chords G, G/D, C, Am7, Dsus4, D, G, G/D, B7/A, and Em/G. The fifth staff (measures 19-23) concludes with chords F#5, F, Em, B5, A7, Am6, B/D#, B7/A, and Em/G. Fingerings and string numbers are provided for each note, and a diamond-shaped barre is indicated on the 12th fret of the 4th string in measure 11.

PLAYING TIPS

CD TRACK 29

[Bar 23] On beat 3 of bar 23 it is not possible to slur the grace notes while holding onto the B7 chord, so I had to slide the F# up to the G and then

quickly re-pluck the F#. If in doubt listen to my recording of the track to see how it should sound.

The sheet music consists of five staves of guitar tablature. Each staff includes a treble clef, a key signature, and a time signature. Chord symbols are placed above the staff, and specific fingers (1, 2, 3, 4) are indicated below the strings to show fingering. The staves are numbered 22, 25, 29, 33, and 37 from top to bottom.

- Staff 1 (Measure 22):** Key of D major (D/C). Chords: E/B, Em, Am7/B, B7, Em. Fingerings: E2, B2, G5, D4, A3; E0, B0, G1, D2, A2; E3, B1, G2, D2, A2.
- Staff 2 (Measure 25):** Key of E major (B7/E). Chords: B13/E, E. Fingerings: E7, B9, G7; E10, B9, G10; E9, B7, G9; E7, B9, G7; E10, B9, G10; E9, B9, G9.
- Staff 3 (Measure 29):** Key of E major (B7/E). Chords: B9/E, E, B13/E, B/E, E. Fingerings: E7, B9, G7; E9, B7, G9; E9, B7, G7; E7, B9, G9; E9, B9, G9.
- Staff 4 (Measure 33):** Key of E major (B7/E). Chords: B7/E, B/E. Fingerings: E11, B9, G9; E9, B7, G9; E9, B7, G7; E7, B9, G9; E9, B8, G8; E7, B9, G9; E9, B8, G8; E7, B9, G9.
- Staff 5 (Measure 37):** Key of E major (Em). Chords: E, A/E, E, A/E, E, Em. Fingerings: E0, B0, G12, D9; E2, B9, G10, D11; E12, B9, G9, D7; E0, B0, G5, D5; E4, B4, G4, D5; E5, B5, G5, D5.

PLAYING TIPS

CD TRACK 29

[Bar 56] Just like bar 25, a four-string barre is used on and off throughout the next 10 bars or so. Again, listen to the recorded track if necessary to

understand the rhythm and phrasing. Next the whole piece is repeated over and ends with a similar theme to that at the start.

B7/E Em Em/G B Em

E B G D A E
0 2 3 5 7 8 | 8 7 7 0 0 3 | 3 2 2 4 4 0 | 12 12 12 0 |
0 7 8 0 0 0 | 0 7 8 0 0 0 | 4 4 4 0 0 0 | 12 12 12 0 |
0 7 8 0 0 0 | 0 7 8 0 0 0 | 4 4 4 0 0 0 | 12 12 12 0 |
0 7 8 0 0 0 | 0 7 8 0 0 0 | 4 4 4 0 0 0 | 12 12 12 0 |
0 7 8 0 0 0 | 0 7 8 0 0 0 | 4 4 4 0 0 0 | 12 12 12 0 |

41

D G G/D C Am7 Dsus4 D G G/D

E B G D A E
0 0 2 3 5 7 8 | 8 7 7 0 0 3 | 3 2 2 3 3 0 | 12 12 12 0 |
0 7 7 0 0 0 | 0 7 7 0 0 0 | 2 3 3 0 0 0 | 12 12 12 0 |
2 0 3 0 0 0 | 3 0 0 0 0 0 | 0 0 0 0 0 0 | 12 12 12 0 |
45

B7/A Em/G F#5 F Em Bb(5) A7 Am6 B/D# B7/A Em/G

E B G D A E
0 8 7 8 0 7 6 | 2 5 4 0 3 0 | 3 2 2 0 7 0 | 0 8 7 8 0 7 6 |
7 0 0 4 3 2 1 | 1 2 1 0 6 7 | 0 0 0 0 0 0 | 7 0 0 0 0 0 |
49

D7/C E/B Em/B Am7/B B7 Em

E B G D A E
2 2 5 4 0 0 | 3 2 2/3 2 0 0 | 0 0 2 0 0 7 | 7 0 0 0 0 0 |
1 0 2 1 0 0 | 2 2 1 0 0 0 | 0 0 0 0 0 0 | 0 0 0 0 0 0 |
3 2 2 1 0 6 | 1 2 1 0 6 7 | 0 0 0 0 0 0 | 0 0 0 0 0 0 |
53

B7/E B13/E E B7/E B13/E E

E B G D A E
9 7 10 9 10 9 7 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 |
8 8 7 7 0 0 9 9 8 8 7 7 0 0 9 9 9 9 |
7 7 0 0 9 9 7 7 0 0 9 9 0 0 9 9 9 9 |
0 0 9 9 0 0 0 0 9 9 0 0 0 0 9 9 9 9 |
56

B7/E B9/E E B13/E B/E E

E
B
G
D
A
E

60

B7/E E B7/E B/E

E
B
G
D
A
E

64

E A/E A A/E E Em D

E
B
G
D
A
E

68

Em C Em

E
B
G
D
A
E

72



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Symphony 40 1st Movement



This month GT's own classical diva **Bridget Mermikedes** arranges and transcribes a piece by one of the genuine daddies of any musical era, the genius that is Mozart.

ABILITY RATING



Moderate/Advanced

| INFO | WILL IMPROVE YOUR |
|------------------------|--|
| KEY: D minor | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Melody-bass separation |
| TEMPO: 148 bpm | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hinge barre technique |
| CD: TRACK 42-43 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Classical repertoire |

IN THIS ISSUE we return once again to a work of the musical genius Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 – 1791). By the time he wrote his Symphony No. 40, completed in 1788, Mozart was in his early 30s and had produced an enormous body of stunning works - including 40 symphonies (He completed the 41st before his 40th), a similar number of concerti for one, two and three pianos, bassoon, violin, flute, harp and horn, 20 operas and hundreds of other works – so his technical ability and creative force were at a peak. Symphony no. 40 is an epic work in four movements whose popularity has endured over centuries, and has had an influence on many composers, including Beethoven. Here I've arranged the first (and most famous) of the four movements with its powerful and much admired tragic theme. A core work of the Classical repertoire, Symphony No. 40 (and often the first movement on its own) has been recorded and performed countless times over the last two centuries, and is embedded in popular culture appearing in many films and TV shows wherever that dark classical vibe is required.

I've changed the original key of G minor to D minor with drop D tuning to help this piece to work effectively on the guitar, and the low D nicely reinforces its sombre character. I've also abbreviated the structure of the first movement's extended sonata form to make it more appropriate for a solo guitar performance, but there's plenty to get your



Mozart: one of music's finest ever composers

“ Symphony no.40 is an epic work in four movements and has influenced many subsequent composers including Beethoven. ”

teeth into here. Incidentally, if you caught the Classical Harmony article in GT226 this provides an excellent case study to see all those concepts in action. As always, be patient learning this arrangement, so you can get the technical control required. There are also some awkward moments, so consult the tab captions to help you best approach them.

In the first few bars fingering is indicated

for both hands to get you started. On the last half beat of bar 9 I use a 'hinge' barre – the F pulls off onto the E note using the first finger as a full barre but the tip of the finger stays off the sixth string so as not to mute the low D. The finger is then in place to press down a full 5th fret barre at bar 10. Same thing happens on the last beat of bar 11 into bar 12. The same kind of hinge barre is also used in bar 15 but the other way round; the barre lifts off on beat 3 for the open E note but the tip of the finger remains in place on the bass note Bb to keep it sustained to the end of the bar. This is typical technique on the classical guitar when we are dealing with polyphonic writing, and simultaneous voices have different note lengths. It's a struggle sometimes but we should always try to give notes their correct values in order for the music to sound good and make sense! This is why finding the most effective fingering is so important.

I hope you enjoy learning this wonderful piece of music, and I'll see you next time with another classical masterpiece arranged for solo guitar. ■

TECHNIQUE FOCUS

USE YOUR NAILS

All professional classical guitarists pluck the strings using the fingernails. These need to be kept the right length and shaped correctly so that they create a good plucking action and the best possible tone. Every serious player keeps a variety of nail files, buffers and a big favourite is very fine wet and dry sanding paper. This is used to smooth off the edges of the nails and keep them buffed to a fine polish. The better the nails the better the tone!



TRACK RECORD If you want to hear this piece in all its detailed glory you can't do better than the Scottish Chamber Orchestra conducted by Sir Charles Mackerras, Symphonies 38-41 (Linn, 2009). For a more sombre performance Emil Tchakarov and the Sofia

[Bar 9] In the first few bars fingering is indicated for both hands to get you started. On the last half beat of bar 9 I use a 'hinge' barre – the F pulls off onto the E note using the first finger as a full barre but the tip of the finger stays off the sixth string so as not to mute the low D. The finger is then in ready place to

press down a full barre at bar 10. Same thing happens on the last beat of bar 11 into bar 12. The same kind of hinge barre is also used in bar 15 but the other way round; the barre lifts off on beat 3 for the open E note but the tip of the finger remains in place on the bass note Bb to keep it sustained to the end of the bar.

J = 148 approx

The sheet music consists of six staves of musical notation for guitar, arranged in two columns of three staves each. The top row starts with a Dm chord, followed by an A7/D chord. The middle row starts with an A7/C♯ chord, followed by an A chord, a Dm chord, and an A7/G chord. The bottom row starts with a Dm/F chord, followed by an A7/G chord, a Dm/F chord, a Bm7 chord, and a B7 chord. Each staff includes a treble clef, a key signature, and a time signature of 4/4. Fingerings are indicated above the strings, and the guitar neck is shown below each staff with fret numbers and string names (E, B, G, D, A, D) on the left.

16

21

F Am G C7/E F Dm G/B C7

51

B♭ A D7 G C7 F B♭7 F

56

B♭ E/B F/C C

61

F N.C.

66

B♭ C F Fsus4 Bsus2 F/A

70

[Bars 77 to end] The chords at bar 77 are played with a downwards strum with the back of the fingernail – either the first or second finger is fine.

whichever works best! Throughout the rest of the piece there are various bits of fingering advice to help you and hopefully the rest will be fairly clear.

Fsus4 Bsus2 F/A A7 Dm Gm/B^b

75

Csus4 C F Fsus4 Bsus2 F/A

79

Fsus4 Bsus2 F/A A7 Dm Gm/B^b

83

Csus4 C F F/A B^b C

87

F C F/A B^b C Dm B^b F/C C

91

p i a m i

F C F C F C F C F

E B G D A D
95

A7 Dm/F Dm/E Dm A7/D

E B G D A D
100

A7/C♯ A Dm A7/G

E B G D A D
105

Dm/F A7/G Dm/F Bm7 aug 6 B7

E B G D A D
110

A Dm A Dm A Dm

E B G D A D
115

Carcassi Opus 60 No.10



Bridget Mermikides continues her classical guitar series with a look at a piece by Italian guitarist and composer Matteo Carcassi...



US virtuoso David Tanenbaum has recorded several Carcassi works

ABILITY RATING



Moderate

| INFO | WILL IMPROVE YOUR |
|------------------|---|
| KEY: D | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hammer-ons and pull-offs |
| TEMPO: 155bpm | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Finger strength & technique |
| CD: TRACKS 55-59 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Position shifting |

WELCOME TO THE third in our series of intermediate lessons exploring the music and technique of the classical guitar. These lessons present pieces and studies by the classical guitar masters of the 18th and 19th centuries and demonstrate useful and common techniques of the style.

This month I'll introduce you to the Italian guitarist and composer Matteo Carcassi, who achieved fame in his lifetime both as a performer and a teacher. His Complete Method For Guitar remains valuable, relevant and widely used today.

His most famous works are his 25 Studies, Opus 60. These pieces combine important technical skills with stunning romantic music. They are perfect for building technique and manageable repertoire, and are used by countless classical guitar teachers and students around the world. Acquiring your own copy is highly recommended; there is simply not a bad work in the book!

The piece in this month's lesson is Number 10 from these 25 studies and it focuses on fretting hand slurs with particular attention to the fourth finger. A lot of players in the early stages of learning the guitar experience a feeling of weakness in the fretting hand's fourth finger and will even avoid using it in favour of the third finger wherever possible. But the fourth finger should not be neglected and this piece is very useful for addressing the issue.

This month's builder exercises are designed as preparation for the Carcassi study but more importantly to help achieve perfect hammer-ons and pull-offs.

Before launching into Exercise 1 we need to examine the basic fretting hand function and check that it is working economically and efficiently. Begin by placing the first and second fingers on the first two notes: 7th and 8th frets, first and second strings. The hand should feel comfortable and stable, fingers curling all together towards the fretboard. Next, place the fourth finger down at the 9th fret (C# on the first string) so the first, second and fourth fingers are now all pressing down simultaneously. From this point keep your first and second fingers pressing down on the strings and slowly lift the fourth finger on and off the fretboard without making a sound. Do not move or rotate the arm, wrist or hand and do not straighten the fourth finger when it is off the string, simply lift it on and off the string keeping its curled shape constantly intact. The movement comes from the knuckle joint of the fourth finger and there should be absolutely no tension at all.

Next, increase the speed of the finger movement in its direction towards the fretboard so it gently taps down on the string and creates a sound. Don't use too much exertion, as this action should not tire the fretting hand or arm. The quality of the movement will determine the quality of the sound produced. Repeat this process for each of the bars containing slurs (hammer-ons) until a good level of comfort and a competent hammer-on is achieved. You will then be ready to execute the exercise. Start slowly at first, and work up to tempo gradually.

For Exercise 2, as with Exercise 1, begin by placing the first, second and fourth fingers on the strings simultaneously. This time we are preparing for a pull-off so it is the first finger we need to think about initially. Make sure the first finger is holding the string down firmly and then 'pluck' the string with the fourth finger at a right angle to it. The pull-off should not be tense or forced but should have the quality of a satisfying 'bite' when executed well. Try all the pull-offs individually, perfecting this technique, before playing the exercise. ■

“A lot of players in the early stages of learning the guitar experience a feeling of weakness in the fretting hand's fourth finger”



TRACK RECORD Award winning David Tanenbaum is chair of the guitar department at San Francisco Conservatory and has been artist in residence at the Manhattan Music School. Along with many recordings featuring modern classical guitar repertoire he has also produced a range of albums in the more traditional style. His *Fstudios - Carcassi, Sor & Brouwer* comes highly recommended

Fretting hand fingering has been suggested throughout and you'll find it mainly favours the fretting hand's fourth finger for slurring; hammer-ons and pull-offs. Although there are places where the third finger could be used (for instance in bar 9), the fourth finger is recommended, since much of the

purpose behind this piece is to strengthen and improve your fourth finger technique. Also, because the fourth finger angle is more perpendicular to the fretboard than that of the third finger, it creates a crisper pull-off once it has gained sufficient strength to perform it correctly.

The sheet music consists of five staves of musical notation for guitar, each with a corresponding string diagram below it. The staves are arranged vertically, with the first staff at the top and the fifth staff at the bottom. The first staff starts at measure 1, 17 and ends at measure 5, 21. The second staff starts at measure 5, 21 and ends at measure 9, 25. The third staff starts at measure 9, 25 and ends at measure 13, 29. The fourth staff starts at measure 13, 29 and ends at measure 33, 57. The fifth staff starts at measure 33, 57 and ends at measure 33, 57. The notation includes various note heads, stems, and rests, with specific fingerings indicated by numbers (e.g., 1, 2, 3, 4) above or below the notes. The string diagrams show the fret positions for each note, with the strings labeled E, B, G, D, A, E from bottom to top. Measure 1, 17 starts in D major and ends in G/D. Measure 5, 21 starts in A7/D and ends in D. Measure 9, 25 starts in E7 and ends in A. Measure 13, 29 starts in Bm/D and ends in E7. Measure 33, 57 starts in A7 and ends in D/A.

[Bars 14 and 15, previous page] It is a common and important technique for the picking hand thumb to damp unwanted ringing bass notes. At the very end of bar 14 the picking hand thumb should very quickly mute (using the pad of the thumb) the open fourth string before playing the open A in bar 15. Immediately after playing this A, the thumb should bounce back and mute

the low E it just played (end of bar 14). Although this may seem fussy, it is an essential element in creating clear sounding harmony. Without this damping the three bass strings will all be ringing together in bar 15, obscuring the harmonic progression. Once the ear becomes trained in these details, it is difficult to ignore them and damping unwanted notes becomes a must!

Em/A

A7

D

Em/D

A7/D

D7

G

D/A

A7

D

37, 61

41, 65

45, 69

49, 73

53, 77



JS Bach

Prelude from Cello Suite No.1



This month our classical maestro **Bridget Mermikides** transcribes a much loved piece by the one of the greatest and most influential composers of all time.

ABILITY RATING



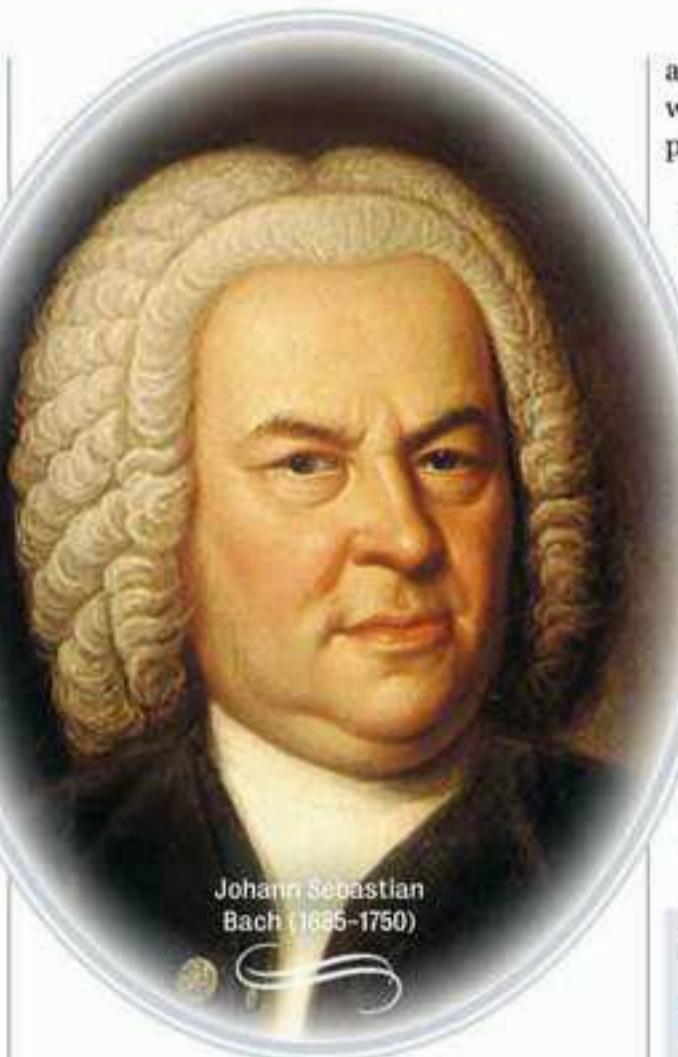
Moderate

| INFO | WILL IMPROVE YOUR |
|---------------|---------------------|
| KEY: D | Arpeggios |
| TEMPO: 65 bpm | Fretting hand slurs |
| CD: Track 21 | Baroque repertoire |

IN THIS ISSUE'S classical column we return to the work of Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750), without doubt one of the greatest composers of all time. Bach was a multi-instrumentalist and hugely prolific composer, who left us a legacy of hundreds of astonishingly beautiful works. His command of counterpoint, harmony and melody was utterly masterful, and the compositional skills he employed in creating what seem like absolutely perfect works has had a huge influence on the development of Western classical music - and indeed Western music of all kinds. An unbelievable quarter of a millennium after his death, his work still has an influence on, and is hugely admired by, musicians from practically every style, from jazz to electronica to metal.

Every one of Bach's works is of the absolute highest quality, but several have also found their way into the mainstream and are widely recognised. One such piece, which I

"Bear in mind that any work you put in now will be rewarded indefinitely as, once learned, you will never tire of playing this masterpiece."



Johann Sebastian
Bach (1685-1750)

have arranged here, is his ever-popular Prelude from Cello Suite No.1. Part of a series of works he composed for unaccompanied cello, they were likely to have been written some time between 1717 and 1723, during one of Bach's happiest and most productive periods under the supportive patronage of Prince Leopold in Köthen.

The Prelude from Cello Suite No.1 is a hugely popular cello work but, as is the case with much of Bach's music, has been adapted with great success to other instruments including piano, trumpet, violin and both

acoustic and electric bass. However this piece with its slurs and ringing arpeggios seems perfectly suited for the guitar.

I've transposed the piece from the originally key of G major to the much more guitar-friendly D major (also using drop D tuning) and, as is popular with guitar arrangements, added some bass notes to the original cello composition.

In case you are in any doubt this piece, as is the case with all of Bach's works, is absolutely exquisite and a masterpiece of compositional technique and musical expression. So bear in mind that any work you put in now will be rewarded indefinitely as, once learned, you will never tire of playing this masterpiece.

Read the tab captions for the trickier sections, enjoy learning the tune and see you next time when we'll be going through another great classical work.

TECHNIQUE FOCUS

PICKING HAND TECHNIQUE

The technique for a classical guitarist's picking hand uses the first three fingers and the thumb. As a general rule, the fingers play the treble or melody notes and the thumb takes care of the bass notes. An important part of technique is to always alternate the fingers when plucking from one note to the next, in particular the first (i) and second (m) fingers, and this should become standard and automatic. When playing arpeggios (broken chords) where all three fingers are used, you should aim to play fingers i, m and a on the third, second and first strings respectively.

[General] This Prelude is originally in the key of G but I've changed it to D and used drop D tuning (D A D G B E) for a lovely rich resonance on the guitar.

[Bars 1-4] The opening four bars are technically easy and include some picking hand fingering. Allow the notes to ring throughout these bars and in bar 3 fret across the top two strings together with the first finger.

[Bar 5] Stay with the first finger by the 2nd fret for the first three beats of bar 5

then switch to the 4th fret on the last beat. For the next couple of bars there is picking hand fingering indicated to help you achieve a fluid performance.

[Bar 7] The fretting hand fingering on the last beat of bar 7 frees the first finger to land smoothly on the first note B of bar 8. There are slurs (legato) included in many places and these are added as a matter of personal musical taste. The use of slurs in this piece is not fixed and can vary from player to player.

J = 65 approx

D **G/D** **A7/D**

D **Bm/D** **E7/G[#]**

A **Bm** **E**

A **F#dim** **D#dim** **B7** **Em**

m 1 **m 1** **m a** **1 m**

[Bar 9] More picking hand fingering is indicated in bar 9 and shows how much of classical guitar playing involves alternating the i and m fingers. This creates smooth fluidity and good technique – do not get into the bad habit of repeating the same finger over and over.

[Bar 11] On bar 11 a barre is needed at the 4th fret before a quick jump back to the first. From here on the fingering and technique continues in much the same way; always think about the picking hand fingering and work out what you are doing rather than leaving it to chance as this will help to develop good technique.

Sheet music for classical guitar, featuring six staves of musical notation. The staves show fingerings, dynamic markings, and chord changes. The chords shown are F#7, Bm, A7/C# (with a barre), D7, G/D, A7/D, D, E7/G#, A/G, A, A7, A7>9, A7, D/A, and E7.

Staff 1: F#7, Bm, A7/C# (barre). Chord boxes: F#7, Bm, A7/C# (barre), A7/C#.

Staff 2: D7, G/D, A7/D. Chord boxes: D7, G/D, A7/D.

Staff 3: D, E7/G#, A/G. Chord boxes: D, E7/G#, A/G.

Staff 4: A, A7, A7>9, A7. Chord boxes: A, A7, A7>9, A7.

Staff 5: D/A, E7. Chord boxes: D/A, E7.

Staff 6: E7. Chord box: E7.

Fingerings:

- Bar 9: i m i m a m a m
- Bar 11: p i m a
- Bar 19: p p a m i a m i
- Bar 22: p p p m i p m i

Dynamic markings:

- Bar 9: p
- Bar 11: p
- Bar 19: p
- Bar 22: p

Chord Boxes:

- Bar 1: F#7
- Bar 2: Bm
- Bar 3: A7/C# (barre)
- Bar 4: D7
- Bar 5: G/D
- Bar 6: A7/D
- Bar 7: D
- Bar 8: E7/G#
- Bar 9: A/G
- Bar 10: A
- Bar 11: A7
- Bar 12: A7>9
- Bar 13: A7
- Bar 14: D/A
- Bar 15: E7

[Bar 31] At bar 31 there is a two-part dialogue where the moving melody line is played with the thumb and the pedal repeated E note is played with the second

finger. Follow the picking hand fingering at the beginning of bars 32, 33 and 35. I hope you have fun and enjoy learning this fantastic piece of music!

The sheet music consists of five staves of musical notation for guitar, with corresponding tablatures below each staff. The staves are labeled A, A7, A, A, and A. The tabs show fingerings (e.g., 5-0, 2-0-2-0, 2-2-1, 4-2-0, 4-2, 0) and picking patterns (e.g., p p p, p m p m p m p m, i m p m, i m p m). The music includes chords Am, A7m, Bm, B7m, C7m, Dm, D7m, Em, E7m, F7m, Gm, G7m, Am, A7, D/A, and a section labeled Asus4. The tabs also include specific picking instructions like 'm l m i p', 's p a p', 'm l p i', 'a l p i', 'm l p i', and 's m p p'.

Johann Strauss II Viennese Blood Waltz



This month **Bridget Mermikides** reckons we should look at a piece in three-quarter time. And where better to start than with The Waltz King himself, the venerable Johann Strauss II.

ABILITY RATING



Moderate

| INFO | WILL IMPROVE YOUR |
|------------------------|--|
| KEY: Drop D | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Playing in 3/4 |
| TEMPO: 138 bpm | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Part separation |
| CD: TRACK 20-21 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Playing in 6ths and 3rds |

THE AUSTRIAN COMPOSER wrote so many engaging and popular waltzes (as well as other dance forms) in the late 19th Century that he became known as The Waltz King. Growing up in a family of composers, Strauss had a hugely busy, occasionally very stressful and fabulously successful musical career. He was essentially the premiere pop songwriter of the day, contributing significantly to the huge popularity of the Viennese waltz. There is an unfussy elegance to his writing that seems accessible to all, which might explain why his music has been used in several films and TV shows every year since 1930, including *Titanic*, *Amélie* and most famously his Blue Danube Waltz in Stanley Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey.

Here I've arranged his famous Wiener Blut which translated as Viennese Spirit, or Viennese Blood, and popularly known as the Viennese Blood Waltz. First performed by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra in 1873, it is in the light 3/4 waltz feel popular at the time, and actually includes a number of themes, from which I've selected and arranged the famous Waltz I which has an extremely simple yet stunningly effective melody.

Originally written in C major (with a

middle section in the key of G major), I've transposed it up a tone to D (with a middle section in A) and used drop D tuning so a wider range of the guitar may be used.

Technically this arrangement requires the ability to play a bass and chordal accompaniment using fretting hand thumb and fingers. This should have a light waltz feel underneath the melody, which is occasionally voiced in 3rds and 6ths. The challenge is to keep an effortless lilting rhythm while

I have 'cheated' by allowing the first bass note of each bar to sustain more than just one beat. This makes it easier but still retains the character.

retaining the lyrical simplicity of the melody. Those of you who caught our recent Classical Harmony article (GT226) should recognise a wealth of diatonic harmony and secondary function chords in this work. I firmly believe that a theoretical understanding of the basic progression can really help memorisation.

This arrangement is a good example of playing in three parts: melody, bass notes and middle accompaniment notes. When playing a solo guitar arrangement we have the technical challenge of playing all parts where an orchestral player only ever has one part to cope with. If you follow the score along with my recording, you may notice that I have 'cheated' by allowing the first bass note of each bar to sustain longer than just the one

beat as written. This is deliberate; it makes it much easier to play without worrying about excessive bass note muting; the best thing about it is that it manages to retain the character of the music.

I do hope you enjoy playing this splendid piece. Why not practise it to Strictly... with the sound turned down of course? ■



TECHNIQUE FOCUS

Use your nails

All professional classical guitarists pluck the strings using the fingernails. These need to be kept at the right length and shaped correctly so that they create a good plucking action and the best possible tone. Every serious player keeps a variety of nail files, buffers and a big favourite is very fine wet-or-dry sanding paper. This is used to smooth off the edges of the nails and keep them buffed to a fine polish! The better the nails, the better the tone - trust me!



TRACK RECORD To hear Wiener Blut alongside other Strauss waltzes including Blue Danube, you can't do better than Decca's classic

- and now remastered - recording with the Vienna Philharmonic: *Johann Strauss Waltzes* (Decca 2000). To dig deeper into Strauss's orchestral catalogue then *Johann Strauss II: The Complete Orchestral Edition* 52-CD collection (Naxos 2011) should keep you busy

A good tip for clearly separating the accompaniment from the melody and also for emphasising the waltz character is to lightly staccato the second

beat underneath the melody wherever the melody has a sustained note (or notes). Listening to the track will hopefully make this clear.

J = 138 approx

E^{pm} **F^{#m}** **D**

Bm/A **F[#]** **Bm/F[#]** **D** **F^{#m}** **A7/E**

Bottom string detuned to D

4.72

Chord boxes: E^{pm}, F^{#m}, D, Bm/A, F[#], Bm/F[#], D, F^{#m}, A7/E.

Fretboard diagrams for each measure showing fingerings (e.g., m, i, 2, 3, 4) and dynamic markings (e.g., p, m, a).

A7 **F[#]** **G** **A7/C[#]**

A7 **B^{pm}** **A7/C[#]**

8.76

Chord boxes: A7, F#, G, A7/C#, A7, Bpm, A7/C#.

Fretboard diagrams for each measure showing fingerings (e.g., 3, 5, 2, 4, 0) and dynamic markings (e.g., -).

A7 **Bm** **Em** **Bm/A** **A** **D/A** **A** **G** **A7** **D**

12.80

Chord boxes: A7, Bm, Em, Bm/A, A, D/A, A, G, A7, D.

Fretboard diagrams for each measure showing fingerings (e.g., 3, 2, 0, 4, 2, 0, 4, 0, 2, 4, 5) and dynamic markings (e.g., -).

D/A **E^{pm}** **F^{#m}** **D** **D/A** **F[#]** **Bm/D**

16.84

Chord boxes: D/A, Epm, F#m, D, D/A, F#, Bm/D.

Fretboard diagrams for each measure showing fingerings (e.g., 1, 2, 3, 4, 0, 2, 3, 2, 3, 4, 0, 4, 4, 4, 0) and dynamic markings (e.g., -).

At the start, picking hand fingering is indicated to give a suggestion of how to organise the fingers. There are varying solutions of how to pluck this

but this is a sensible start. Where possible I use a rest stroke on the melody (free stroke thumb) – an example being the melody note G in bar 9.

Bm/A F# D F#m A7/E

E B G D A D
20, 88

G F# A7/E G Gaug A7

E B G D A D
24, 92

G Bm/A A Em G/A A/C# A D Fine

E B G D A D
28, 96

E9 A/E E7 A F#m/C# A

E B G D A D
33, 49 m i a m i a

E/B E E7 F#m D/F# F#m

E B G D A D
37, 53

If you listen to any orchestral recording of this you will hear that the tempo often changes quite dramatically from one section to the next. I have kept it at a fairly even tempo throughout – with a slight speeding up at bar 65

followed by a rit (ritardando or 'slow down') in bar 68 to ease you back to the main waltz theme. As a relatively simple piece to play, the key is in your expression, so concentrate on your feel and dynamics throughout.

E9

A/E **E7**

A

F#m/C# **A**

41, 57

B7/F#

F7

E

A

45, 61

A

D/A

A

E#m **F#m**
D.S. al Fine

rit -----

65

DAVE MANN MUSIC

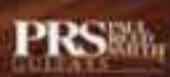
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Georges Bizet

Habanera



This month, **Bridget Mermikides** arranges and transcribes a beautiful aria from Bizet's groundbreaking opera, Carmen, for solo guitar.

ABILITY RATING



Moderate

INFO WILL IMPROVE YOUR

KEY: D min/ D maj Bass/melody independence
TEMPO: 53 bpm Bass-string muting
CD: TRACKS 34-35 Use of dynamics

THERE ARE COUNTLESS and diverse musical cultures and styles throughout the world, but once in a while a composer hits on a work that seems to speak to just about every listener.

One such piece is Bizet's *L'Amour Est Un Oiseau Rebelle* (*Love Is A Rebellious Bird*), better known simply as Habanera. An instantly recognisable piece, Habanera is the opening aria from Act I, scene 5 of the opera *Carmen*, the most famous opera by the highly successful French romantic composer, Georges Bizet (1838-75) and indeed one of the most popular opera moments of all time. The aria is sung by the sultry gypsy – the eponymous Carmen – as she seduces the hapless Don José. There is something in the insistent Latin rhythm, the infectious descending chromatic melody and the pedal D underneath the harmony which weaves the perfect atmosphere for the scene.

The melody itself is in fact not original (Bizet thought it was a traditional folk tune but it had actually been written only a few years previously by a Spanish composer) but it is the man's

brilliant arranging and orchestration that really brings it to life.

I've retained the original key of Dm (modulating to D major), dropping the sixth string from E to D, and the piece works surprisingly well on the solo guitar. The rhythm which opens the piece – and remains prominent throughout – has a distinctly Latin feel. It is based on a

“From a performance standpoint you'll want to keep this as lyrical and legato as possible: use the tab captions to guide you through.”

19th Century dance known as the Contradanza (or Habanera outside its native Cuba) and has a wonderfully evocative tango-esque flavour. This should be played as snappily as possible, and if you want this piece to sound its best, you'll have to work to mute the bass notes, keeping them at their written length (see the tab captions for more direction). This bass rhythm is coupled with the famous, and gorgeous, descending melody line.

From a performance standpoint you'll want to keep this as lyrical and legato as possible – again, the tab captions will guide you through the trickier sections.

Finally, you'll want to emulate the drama with the stabs in bars 36, 40, 52, 56 and 60, so aim to create as much dynamic contrast as possible here. Working on all these details will pay off in the end and you'll be rewarded with a wonderful piece to add to your working repertoire.

NEXT MONTH: Bridget tabs Bach's *Anna Magdalena Minuet*



Georges Bizet:
Carmen's brilliant
French composer



TRACK RECORD The opera diva Maria Callas delivers a classic performance of Bizet's Habanera on the 1964 EMI recording *Carmen*:

Highlights. But you might prefer a more restrained and naturally voiced interpretation, and in that case I'd recommend the

PLAYING TIPS

CD TRACK 35

[Bars 1 - 3] The opening three bars imitate the pizzicato cellos of the original orchestral version and I recommend playing palm muted and pluck with the flesh of the thumb for the desired effect. A light staccato on the F note will set the scene of the habanera style. When the melody starts in bar 4, it is no longer feasible to play the bass notes muted, so switch to normal plucking and try to get a subtle blend of tone from muted to non muted by not playing the basses too loudly. The melody can be played mainly rest stroke to give it a warm full tone. There is some indicated fingering for both hands to help you, so do follow it carefully. A difficult aspect here is the articulation of the bass line – the problem being the low D on the first beat of every bar, which once plucked will naturally sustain for the whole bar unless we do something to mute it. Muting bass notes is a huge part of classical guitar technique and something good players will do without thinking. In the Habanera, the moment in the bar to mute is immediately after the second

beat so that the low D is no longer audible during the second half of the bar.

[Bar 4] For example, in bars 4 and 5 mute the low D with the pad of the thumb immediately after plucking the bass note F (fifth string, 8th fret) by getting the thumb to 'spring back' and mute the sixth string before plucking the bass note A. This action of plucking and muting happens in one smooth and efficient movement of the thumb.

[Bar 6] Bar 6 has the added problem of both the D and the A bass notes ringing through the bar, because the bass note F is now played on the fourth string instead of the fifth. This time, I mute the fifth and fourth strings simultaneously by allowing the thumb to spring back to the A – in the same way as it did for the low D in bars 4 and 5, but the thumb also leans back slightly so its side touches and mutes the low D at the same time.

[Bars 8 - 10] Bars 8, 9 and 10 are much easier for the bass articulation because the Bb, played on the sixth string, cuts off the low D automatically.

$\text{♩} = 53$ approx Dm

[Bar 20] At bar 20, we are in D major, and a half barre is needed where the melody starts on beat two. Aim to make the top line smooth and legato by

following the suggested fretting hand fingering up to bar 27 – all the while remembering to think about expression and dynamics.

13

E B G D A D

17

E B G D A D

20

D5 D/F# Dmaj7/A D7 D6 Dmaj7/6 D Dadd#11 A7sus4 D G5/F# D/A

E B G D A D

24

Em/D A7/D A7 A13/G A

E B G D A D

[Bar 28] The next section starting on beat 2 of bar 28 leads up to the end and should be played with more definition and accentuation. Take some

time with a bit of rubato (pull back on the timing at your own discretion) in bars 39 and 43 (listen to the CD if needed).

D

G/F# D/A

E B G D A D

28

Em/D A9/D A7/C# A9

E B G D A D

3 7 0 7 0 7
5 8 8 7
0 0 0 0
0 2 3 5
0 0 0 0
0 7 7 7 9 7
8 8 8 8
6 6 6 6
0 0 0 0

The musical score consists of two parts: a top section showing chords and a bottom section showing the corresponding fingerings and string numbers for a six-string guitar.

Top Section (Chords):

- Chord 1: D
- Chord 2: D/A
- Chord 3: D/F# A5
- Chord 4: D
- Chord 5: D/A
- Chord 6: D/F# A5
- Chord 7: D
- Chord 8: A5
- Chord 9: D/F# A7
- Chord 10: D
- Chord 11: D/F# A

Bottom Section (Fingerings and String Numbers):

| | E | B | G | D | A | D |
|----------|---|---|---|---|----|---|
| Chord 1 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Chord 2 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Chord 3 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Chord 4 | 5 | 3 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Chord 5 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Chord 6 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 10 | 9 |
| Chord 7 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Chord 8 | 0 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Chord 9 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 10 | 9 |
| Chord 10 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 10 | 9 |
| Chord 11 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

A7/D Em/B Em/G B5 Em/D Em/B Em/G B5 Em/D B5 Em/G Esus4 A

E 9 7 0 8 7 0
B 8 7 0 9 0 7
G 9 0 7 0 0 0
D 0 0 0 0 0 0
A 0 0 0 0 0 0
D 0 0 0 0 0 0

40 a m i p

[Bar 59] For the slurred triplet leading into the last bar, I like to use the fourth finger (rather than the third) of the fretting hand to execute the

hammer-on and pull off, as I find it makes the shift to the chord easier. Good luck – I hope you enjoy learning this legendary piece of music!

44

E B G D A D
3 3 0 2 5 2 0 3 3 5 7 5 5 5 7 5 3 7 0 7
4 0 4 0 0 4 0 4 0 0 4 0 0 9 0 0 9 9

49

E B G D A D
8 8 7 0 2 3 5 7 7 7 7 9 7 5 3 0
0 9 9 0 2 2 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

53

E B G D A D
2 5 2 0 0 2 3 5 5 5 5 10 9 10 9 7 0 7
3 3 0 3 3 5 7 10 12 9 10 14 12 14 12 10 5 10
4 0 4 0 0 4 0 0 9 0 0 0 9 0 0 9 9

57

E B G D A D
0 9 9 0 2 3 5 9 12 9 10 14 12 14 12 10 5 10
8 8 7 0 0 2 2 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

Erik Satie

Gnossienne No. 2



Bridget Mermikides arranges a piano piece by Erik Satie, a true innovator of classical composition whose work influenced a host of later composers, across countless genres and generations.

ABILITY RATING



Moderate

| INFO | WILL IMPROVE YOUR |
|-----------------|---|
| KEY: 'Open' key | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Melody over chords |
| TEMPO: 58 bpm | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use of artificial harmonics |
| CD: TRACK 18 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fingerpicking patterns |

IN THIS ISSUE'S classical-guitar column, we return to the work of the highly influential French pianist and composer Erik Satie (1866-1925). Although Satie received much criticism in his day – dismissed as dull, talentless or bizarre – his mesmerising music has gone on to influence a huge range of composers and artists in a range of styles from jazz and ambient to minimalism and electronica. At a time when composers were writing romantic music of increasing virtuosity and harmonic/textural complexity, Satie chose the quiet rebellion of simple, sparse, seductive melodies. He often drew on exotic scales and modes, and created musical atmospheres that were both accessible and utterly transporting to the listener.

Here, I've arranged his gorgeous Gnossienne No. 2 from a set of three short piano pieces composed around 1890 and published in 1893. These have appeared in many TV shows and films, including Scorsese's *Hugo* (2011) and the soundtrack to the Oscar-winning documentary *Man On Wire* (2008).

Gnossienne No. 2 is written without bar lines, but I've included them and written the piece out in the implied 4/4 meter, with triplets in the melody, for clarity. It could also be written in 12/8, and this metric ambiguity predates

similar ideas in minimalist composers such as Steve Reich and Philip Glass.

The piece is also written in an 'open key', so with no prescribed key signatures, and the chord progression wanders enigmatically through various and diverse modal centres, including G Dorian, E Phrygian, A, F and F# Ionian, A Lydian and the exotic D Dorian b5 and D Locrian nat.2.

In terms of chords, Gm and Em are key resting points, and they respectively start and end the piece. I've kept the tune in the original transposition and very close to the original composition (switching some octaves when

"Satie chose quiet rebellion: simple, sparse and seductive melodies, drawing on exotic scales and modes."

necessary). However, to make the piece idiomatic and sonorous for the guitar, the sixth and fifth strings are both tuned down a tone to D and G respectively.

Even at this slow tempo, it will take some work to create an appropriate lyricism in the melody, a balance of bass, melody and

chords, and a clarity in the artificial harmonics, so refer to the tab captions to help guide you through this wonderful piece. I've put in translations of Satie's lovely and bizarre performance instructions (which include with astonishment, don't leave, with much kindness, and without arrogance) for you to enjoy, and even somehow follow!

This enchanting piece consists of three parts: melody line, bass notes and supporting harmony in the form of two- and three-note chords. The opening two melody notes can be played rest stroke to stand out, and the high E needs to be held and sustained over the following accompaniment chords, the second of which needs to be held and sustained underneath the melody triplets. The same exact sustaining techniques apply throughout the whole piece where longer melody notes or chords occur. Some fretting-hand fingering is indicated in the first few bars to help you. ■

NEXT MONTH: Bridget arranges Bizet's *Habanera*, from *Carmen*



Pianist and
composer,
Erik Satie



TRACK RECORD It's always worth listening to pieces in their original form, on the instrument they were written for; this gives brilliant clues as to dynamics, emotion etc. Aldo Ciccolini's 1992 double-CD release: *Satie: L'Oeuvre Pour Piano* includes an excellent rendition of Gnossienne No. 2 along with many of his other solo works, including the famous Gymnopédie No. 1 (arranged in GT202).

[Bar 3] In bar 3, the second melody-note B is played as a harmonic using the picking hand only; the first finger of the picking hand touches the second string directly over the 12th fret, and the third finger (a) of the same hand

plucks the string to sound it. This type of harmonic occurs a few more times in the piece, but at bar 13, the A note is held on the third string, 2nd fret and played by touching the string at the 14th fret and plucking the same way.

With astonishment

L = 53 approx

5th string = G,
6th string = D

E B G D G D
10 12 8 6 7 0
8 6 8 7 0 0
0 8 7 0 2 2
0 0 0 0 0 0

NH

F/E Em Don't leave

E B G D G D
0 10 12 8 6 10 8 10 8 10
2 0 8 7 0 6 5 6 5 6
3 0 8 7 0 7 5 7 5 6
2 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

Ddim Em/D Ddim B7/D

E B G D G D
4 1 3 3 1 3 0 3 3 3 3 3
3 1 3 0 2 3 3 3 3 3 3 3
0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

With great kindness

E B G D G D
0 0 0 0 0 0
0 6 3 4 6 8 10 8 6 4 6 4
2 0 2 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3
0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

NH --- NH --- NH

PLAYING TIPS

CD TRACK 18

[Bar 15] At bar 15, use a five-string barre, and release it on the next bar. Much of the piece from here on is repeated. Although relatively simple,

the point about pieces like this is that they give you space to add your own dynamics and emotion. I hope you find it enjoyable to learn and to play!

A

G/A

A

A (Lydian)

More intimately

AH
14

E B G D G D
13

F#

F

A (Lydian)

E B G D G D
16

F#

F

Dm

E B G D G D
19

Cm/D

Dm

B7/D

Em

With light intimacy

NH---

E B G D G D
22

Without arrogance

E 6 3 4 6 8 10 8 6 4 6 4
B 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3
G 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3
D 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3
G 0 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2
D 25 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2

E 10 12 8 10 8 10 8 10 6 8 5 6 5 6 5 6
B 8 6 7 5 7 5 7 5 2 0 0 0 1 0
G 0 7 8 7 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 3 0
D 8 7 5 7 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0
G 5 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2
D 29 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2

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[Bars 1-12] The start of the piece sets up the arpeggio accompaniment figure and is straightforward: bass notes are plucked with the thumb and the arpeggios notes with i m a. Keep the volume low and to help the melody stand out from the accompaniment, rest stroke can be used. A barre is needed at bar 10 but can be dropped on the last beat when the Eb melody note comes in.

The barre is back at bar 12 but should be placed on the last 16th note of bar 11. On beat 2 of bar 12 we unfortunately lose the full length of the melody note Eb when reaching down for the bass note G. However the ear manages to still 'hear' the melody note even though it does not sustain and it does not mar the overall effect of the piece.

[Bars 16-24] This is tricky and the fretting hand feels a little squashed at the beginning of the bar. Also the melody note is unfortunately lost on beat 2 in order to accommodate the accompaniment, but the fingering indicated here is a

good solution for keeping the triplets fluent. A barre should be placed on the last 16th note of bar 24 to keep the melody connected.

16

19

22

25

28

[Bars 16-24] This is tricky and the fretting hand feels a little squashed at the beginning of the bar. Also the melody note is unfortunately lost on beat 2 in order to accommodate the accompaniment, but the fingering indicated here is a

good solution for keeping the triplets fluent. A barre should be placed on the last 16th note of bar 24 to keep the melody connected.

[Bars 52-57] In bar 52 we have the awkward fretting hand issue again where the fingers feel squashed in too close together. With perseverance it does work! At bar

57 we get this lovely descending sequence and if possible try to allow the upper melody notes to sustain over each triplet figure.

46

A musical score for guitar featuring a treble clef staff and a six-string guitar neck below it. The staff has a key signature of one sharp. The score consists of seven measures. Measure 1: Chord E7, indicated by a large 'E7' above the staff and a 'p' dynamic below it. Measure 2: Chord Am, indicated by a large 'Am' above the staff. Measure 3: Chord Bb/D, indicated by a large 'Bb/D' above the staff. Measure 4: Chord Bb, indicated by a large 'Bb' above the staff. Measure 5: Chord E7, indicated by a large 'E7' above the staff. Measure 6: Chord Am, indicated by a large 'Am' above the staff. Measure 7: Chord A, indicated by a large 'A' above the staff. The guitar neck shows fingerings (e.g., 3, 2, 1) and rests. The strings are labeled E, B, G, D, A, E from bottom to top.

Dm6/A Dm Dm/F G^Δdim7/D A Dm6/A Dm Dm/F G^Δdim7/D

E 6 5 6 7 6 5 6 4 5 6 5 5 5 6
B 7 7 6 7 7 0 7 6 5 7 6 7 6 7 6 5
G 7 7 7 8 7 7 7 0 7 8 7 7 7 0 7 6
D 5 6 5 8 6 5 7 5 8 7 6 5 8 7 0 7 6
A 6 5 6 8 7 6 5 7 8 7 6 5 8 7 0 7 6
E 6 5 6 8 7 6 5 7 8 7 6 5 8 7 0 7 6

55

Dm6/F Dm6 Esus2 Dm6 Am/E E E7 Am

E 3 0 0 0 0
B 2 4 2 4 2 0
G 3 2 4 2 0 2
D 3 2 2 2 2 0
A 2 2 2 2 2 0
E 0 0 0 0 0 0

58

[Bars 60 to end] From bars 60 to 65 there is a dotted eighth note plus sixteenth note playing beneath the eighth note triplets. This is not too difficult and just

requires a bit of precision with the thumb. The piece eventually dies away softly in A minor arpeggios and the final A minor chords.

E7

Am/E

G⁷dim7/E

Am/E

Am

decresc

Am/E

Am

pp

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Isaac Albéniz
performing at
the piano-forté

Despite its relaxed and easy sounding feel, this piece is something of a challenge to play to performance standard. The best approach to learning it would be to break it down into sections and work carefully on one bit at a time. After the two-bar intro the main melody begins in bar 3. Play the first three F# notes rest stroke so they stand out. Using the second finger on this note 'anchors' it on the string as it moves up a fret for the G leaving the fourth and first fingers free for the grace note A (4) then F# (1). The second finger needs to be solid on the G note to cater for the grace note pull-off, and this can take practice to make it come out crisp and clean.

On the last half beat of bar 5 a barre across five strings is needed and I use the third finger on the last F# of the bar in order to slide it up a fret to the G in bar 6. The A9 chord on the third half-beat of bar 8 is spread upwards using the thumb to drag through the two lower notes as indicated. At bar 11 use a barre at the 7th fret for two and a half bars. On the last B note of bar 13 I use a 'hinge barre' - keeping the first finger straight and pressing the B with the side of the finger, creating a smooth link to the barre on the first chord of bar 14. I do the same thing on both C# notes in bar 16 to help prepare for the chords to follow. If you're not used to hinge barres this will take practice.

D
J = 45 approx

Dropped D tuning

B(11) A7/E A7 A9/C# A7sus4/E A7/E A9

A7sus4 A6 A7 Bdim/D D Bm G/F Bm

G/B Bm E9 C#7/A#7 E7/B G/B A/C# F#m

PLAYING TIPS

On the first chord (F#7#5 to F#7) of bar 24 a barre is needed and if you follow the fretting hand fingering, the second and third fingers may feel like they are the wrong way round. However, if you try it you will hopefully discover that it is the most comfortable way in the long run (as these things often

turn out to be). From this point up to bar 40 there is a degree of technical awkwardness and this is why it is so challenging to make the music flow. Work on very small sections and gradually piece them together, as the rewards in having such a fabulous piece in your armoury, go without saying.

Bm7 3 E7 A D

17

B/D# Em6 F#7 A7/G G/B F#7

21

F#A# F#7 C#B Bm G/B 3 Bm7

25

G/B 3 A/C# G Bm G#m7>5 3 F#C#

29

C#7 3 **F#A#** **F#m7>5** 3 **F#7**

E B G D A D
4 6 9 7 6 4 9 7 6 6 13 13 11 9 6 4 6 4 2 7
33

B/F# **C#7** **F#** 3 **C#7/F#** 3 **C#7** **F#** **D7** 3

E B G D A D
7 6 4 7 6 6 7 7 8 9 13 11 9 7 9 13 13 11 0 14 11 5 10 12
37

A7 3 **C#7** **F#** **B7>9** 3 **F#m/E** 3 **A7** **D** **D/A**

E B G D A D
5 8 10 6 9 2 2 5 3 2 5 12 5 6 7 7 7 7 10 8 7
41

D **D/A** **D** **B/D#** **A7/E** **A7** **A7/C#** **A7 Asus9**

E B G D A D
10 11 10 12 14 9 12 10 7 8 6 7 8 10 12 9 10 12 10
11 14 11 6 7 0 11 12 0 11 12 0
45

PLAYING TIPS

The D7 chord on bar 40 is spread and begins with the thumb striking twice (sixth then fourth string). The same thing happens on bar 57. At bar 44 the main tune comes but it changes at bar 52. There is recommended fretting

hand fingering indicated here to help you achieve a secure technical solution and a fluid performance, so do pay attention to it. It really is worth putting the effort in to learn this fantastic piece - as I hope you'll agree.

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'portrait' of
Edward Elgar

PLAYING TIPS

CD TRACK 10

This piece is lush, smooth and legato in its original orchestral form, something hard to emulate on the classical guitar because once we have plucked our strings the notes die quite quickly. Try therefore to make the chords sustain by hanging on to them as long as possible. Of course, doing this means that efficient chord changes will also need to be mastered.

To make the chords sound 'bigger' I have played quite a number of them 'spread': this means rolling the chords from low to high, the bass note thumb first, then the fingers following. This spreading of the chords should not be overdone as it's possible to start to lose the pulse. So keep some of the chords straight but always aim to keep the melody line intact.

$\downarrow = 40$
approx

E 2 3 3 0
B 3 3 3 0
G 2 0 2 0
D 0 2 0 2
A 0 0 0 0

Low string tuned to D

E 2 5 14 4
B 3 10 7 9
G 2 11 4 9
D 0 0 0 11
A 0 0 0 0

E 2 3 3 0
B 3 3 3 0
G 2 0 2 0
D 0 2 0 2
A 0 0 0 0

PLAYING TIPS

CD TRACK 10

In bars 9, 28 and 40 the D chord is played spread with the thumb plucking twice in quick succession on the two lowest D notes. Listening to the audio

will underline the sound and get it into your head - the tab and notation will then help you to articulate the piece.

Chords: D, Gmaj7/D, A7/C♯, D/C♯, G/B, A, A9/G, A/G, D/F♯, Dm6/F, A7/E

Fingerings:

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|----|----|--|----|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| E | 2 | 5 | 14 | | 12 | 7 | 9 | 0 | 7 | 5 | | 0 |
| B | 3 | 10 | 8 | | 12 | 8 | 5 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 0 | 2 |
| G | 2 | 11 | 11 | | 12 | 11 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| D | 0 | 0 | 9 | | 11 | 11 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| A | | | | | 0 | | 5 | 5 | | 3 | | 2 |
| D | | | | | | | | | | | | |

13

Chords: Em/D, A7/C♯, D6, F♯/C♯, Emadd9/B, A/C♯, G6/B, D/A, A7, D/A, Bm/D

Fingerings:

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|---|---|
| E | 3 | | 2 | | 0 | 2 | 0 | 5 | 7 | | |
| B | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 10 | 8 | 7 |
| G | 2 | 7 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 11 | 9 | 7 | |
| D | 5 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 4 | | | |
| A | 4 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | | | |
| D | 0 | | | | | | | 0 | | | |

17

Chords: A9/C♯, A9/E, A, A9/G, D/A, A/E, D/A, G

Fingerings:

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| E | 7 | | 5 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| B | 5 | | 6 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| G | 6 | | 5 | 7 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 5 | 4 |
| D | 5 | | 7 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 0 | | |
| A | 7 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| D | | | | | | | | | | | | |

21

PLAYING TIPS

CD TRACK 10

To get a piece like this sounding as good as possible, cleanly articulated chord changes are vital. Once you've learnt the music and can play it

without mistakes, take some time to add in something of your own - playing pieces like this convincingly, is all about expression and feel.

Em7 A7/D A7/C♯ A9/C♯ A G A/C♯ A7 D G/B D/F♯ Asus4 A7

E B G D A D
3 2 0 2 0 0
0 0 0 2 0 0
2 5 2 0 2 0
2 0 4 0 0 0
0 0 0 0 0 0
25

D Bm E7/B A Dmaj7/A A7 D Gmaj7/D A7/C♯ D/C♯ G

E B G D A D
2 5 10 9 0 3
3 7 5 5 3 2
2 7 7 6 6 0
0 6 4 0 2 0
9 9 0 0 0 0
30

A A9/G A7/G D/F♯ Dm6/F A7/E Em/D A7/C♯ A7/E G/D A7/C♯ A7

E B G D A D
9 0 7 5 2 0
5 2 3 0 2 0
6 2 2 2 0 0
5 2 4 0 2 0
0 5 3 2 0 0
34

Gm/D A7/C♯ A7/B A A7 A D G/B D/F♯ Asus4 A7 D

E B G D A D
3 3 2 2 0 0
3 3 2 2 0 0
5 4 2 0 0 0
0 0 0 0 0 0
38

Luigi Boccherini's
Minuet became a
surprise 'big hit'



Luigi Boccherini
Né à Lugo le 14 Janvier
1743. Mort à Madrid.
1805.

A small illustration at the bottom center showing a harp-like instrument with four sets of strings labeled 'TERZETTI', 'QUARTETTI', and 'QUINTETTI'. A coiled serpent is wrapped around the base of the instrument.

[Bars 1-16] The Minuetto begins with ornamented semiquavers. These grace notes need to be played lightly and clearly - a good opportunity to examine your second to fourth finger hammer-on and pull-off! The first phrase includes some fretting hand fingering ideas to aid smoothness. The second phrase begins with the same embellishment; again aim to play it crisply and clearly. The final semiquaver of bar 4 should be played with a hinge barre at the 2nd fret to prepare for the next two bars, both of which

require a five-string barre - this is also needed on the last beat of bar 7 to support the trill. The next section starting upbeat into bar 18 is reasonably easy fingering-wise, but will sound really tidy if you mute the bass notes in the correct places; mute the A (with the thumb) from beat 3 of bar 17 after you play the low E on beat 1 of bar 18. Then mute the E after playing the A on beat 3 of bar 18 and so on. This may sound fiddly but without it you get both the A and E bass notes ringing at the same time and that bugs me!

The sheet music consists of five staves of musical notation for guitar, arranged vertically. Each staff includes a treble clef, a key signature of two sharps, and a common time signature. The first four staves begin with a vertical bar line, indicating a new section. The first staff starts with a tempo of 72 approx. The notation includes various note heads, stems, and bar lines. Below each staff is a string diagram with six horizontal lines representing the strings (E, B, G, D, A, E) from top to bottom. Fret numbers are indicated above the strings, and fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4) are shown above or below the notes. Chords labeled include A, E7, B7, Am, and E. Performance instructions like 'tr' (trill), 'rit' (ritardando), and 'a tempo' are included. Measure numbers and page numbers (e.g., 96, 97, 102, 105, 108) are provided at the bottom of each staff.

[Bar 19 to end] On bar 28 use a four-string barre at the 2nd fret for the first two beats, getting your fretting hand nicely in second position for the D chord on beat 2. Then come back to first position with the second finger for the trill to end the section.

[Bar 43] The Trio starts suddenly and is played at a faster tempo – follow the fretting hand fingering on the 6ths to keep it neat and play the semiquavers nice and lightly. Bar 49 is played in fourth position to help prepare for the

fingering in the following bar. There are repeats on every section of this piece so work on some contrasting tone colours and dynamics to keep it musical and interesting. In bar 76 at the end of the trio you need a full barre on beats 1 and 2 (second then third position) then on beat 3 I use a hinge barre for a half beat before sliding the second finger back to the C# and then back up to the D. Now play the Minuetto again but without repeats and don't forget to revert back to the original slower tempo!

E7

E B G D A E

0 3 3 1 2 3 5 3 0 0 1 3 2 2 0 2 3 0

24, 37, 111

E7

E B G D A E

2 1 1 1 3 0 2 1 1 1 3 0 2 2 4 3 2 0 2 4 0

27, 40, 114

TRIO

D

$\text{♩} = 92$ approx

E B G D A E

0 2 4 0 2 4 0 2 4 0 3 2 0 5 3 2 0 2 0

44, 53

D

E B G D A E

2 0 2 3 5 2 3 5 2 2 0 3 2 4 2 0 3 2 0 3 2 1 2

47, 58

E7/D

A/C \sharp

E

A

E B G D A E

0 0 0 0 6 5 6 5 6 7 4 6 6 6 4 2 1 2 0 2 0 0

50, 59

A D/A A D/A A

E B G D A E

62, 79

A D/A A D/A

E B G D A E

66, 83

D

E B G D A E

69, 86

A7

E B G D A E

72, 89

A7/G D/F# Em/G A D

D.C. al Fine

E B G D A E

75, 92

J S BACH: AIR ON A G STRING



Johann Sebastian
Bach: one of the
greatest and
most influential
composers

[Bars 1-12] The opening bass line jumps octaves in the original orchestral score but on solo guitar it is very difficult to successfully achieve this in combination with playing the upper harmony. The bass notes are therefore simply repeated, which I feel is a reasonable compromise since the harmonic progression is well maintained.

In bar 2 keep hold of the first bass note of F while stretching to the A note on the first string. Immediately follow by placing down a barre at the 1st fret for the F

note on the first string, still keeping the bass note sustained. Sustaining the bass notes as fully as possible is a key component in achieving a convincing sound in this piece so hang on to them and try to avoid clipping them short.

[Bars 13-14] In bar 8, when moving onto the last beat use a three-string barre so that the G melody note can be sustained when catching the Bb on the last half beat of the bar. Bar 14 needs sustain on the high A note and the fretting hand fingering is designed to help create a smooth melody line overall.

The sheet music consists of five staves of musical notation for guitar, numbered 1 through 14. Each staff includes a treble clef, a key signature, and a tempo marking of $\text{♩} = 55$. The staves show various chords and melodic patterns with corresponding fingerings (e.g., 0, 1, 2, 3) and barre markings. Chord names include C, C/B, Am, Am/G, Fmaj7, D7/F# (with a trill), G, G/F, Em7/B5, Em7/B5/D, A/C# (with a trill), Asus, A, A7, Dm, Dm/C, G/B, G, C, C/B, Gmaj7/B, G/B, Am, D/F# (with a trill), D7, G, Am/C, D7, G, G7, G, Am/C, D7, G, G7/F, Em7/B5, A/E, Em7/B5/D, A/C# (with a trill), A7/E, A7-13A7, Dm, Dm/C, E7/B, Bm7/B5/A, Am, Dm/A, E/G#, Dm/A, E/B, E/G#.

PLAYING TIPS

CD TRACK 19

[Bars 17-18] On the last beat of bar 12 hold the C bass note and add a 2nd fret barre on beat 4. On the first beat of bar 18 a grace note (appoggiatura) lands on the beat and takes half the value of the semiquaver (16th note).

[Bars 19-end] Drop the volume at bar 19 then crescendo through the next two

bars. In bar 21 on the last 16th note F of beat two, barre the first finger across the top two strings to execute the melody when landing on the Csus4 chord, then 'seesaw' back onto the tip of the finger for the next C chord. Aim to keep clarity and sustain throughout and, above all, have fun with this wonderful piece!

Am Esus7/D E7/13 Am

D7/F# D

D7/C

G/B Am/C D7 G

G/F C/E C7/E F

Fmaj7 D/F#

G G7

E7/G# A A7 Dm Dm/C

G/B G7/B G

G7/B Csus4 C C/B

F/A C/G C7/G/F

F/E Ddim

F/C

G/B G

Csus4 C

Dm/F Dm7/G

G C

20

22

Exact Science



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