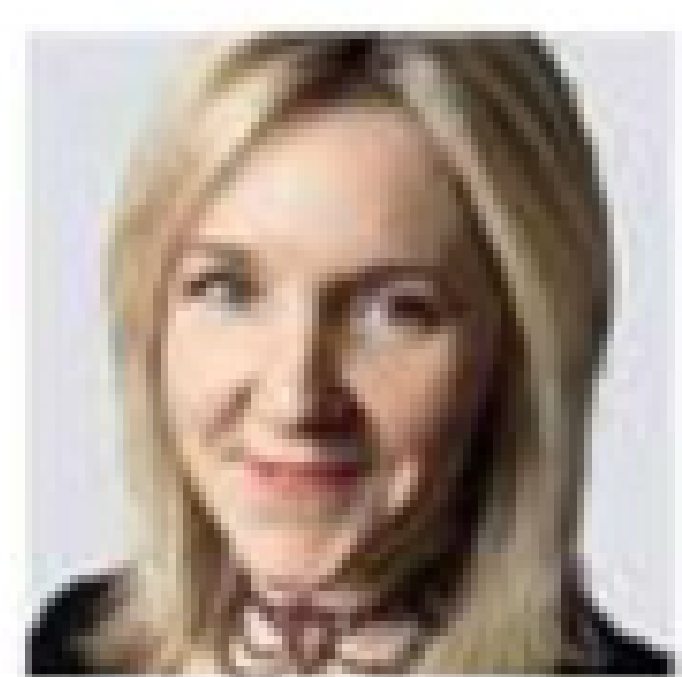


Frédéric Chopin

Nocturne opus 9 no.2



Bridget Mermikides arranges and transcribes a wonderful piece for solo guitar, by one of the world's most celebrated virtuoso composers.

ABILITY RATING

● ● ● ● ● Moderate/Advanced

INFO	WILL IMPROVE YOUR
KEY: C	✓ Picking hand control
TEMPO: 58 bpm	✓ Melody and comping
CD: Tracks 31-32	✓ Expression and rubato

FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN (1810-1849) was a Polish virtuoso pianist of uncanny instrumental ability, and a composer of over 200 works for the instrument. In fact, Chopin only wrote pieces that included the piano, but somehow managed to compose works of such breadth, originality and expression that he has earned his place in the pantheon of great composers of the Romantic era alongside the likes of Brahms, Tchaikovsky, Schubert, Puccini and Verdi (arranged in GT issues 195, 192, 189, 193 and 190 respectively).

Chopin has endured not only because of his superb works but also because of the romantic image he portrays: the gaunt artist plagued by demons and fighting to compose as his life fades with his dwindling health. However - as is often the case - the myth only tells part of the story. Chopin did indeed suffer terribly at times with ill health (nursed by his long-term lover and friend the infamous Amantine Dupin (aka George


“A case can be made that it was Chopin's love and passion for music that kept him so productive for so long, not a desperate fear of death.”



Sand), endured psychological torment - probably due to physiological issues - and died at the young age of 39. However he did enjoy periods of good health and had a vigorous lust for life, so a case can be made that it was his love and passion for music that kept him so productive for so long, and not a desperate fear of death.

Chopin wrote many absolutely beautiful works, pulling from the piano extraordinary depths of expression. For this issue I've arranged his ever-popular bittersweet Nocturne in E-flat major, Op. 9, No. 2. This remarkable work was composed at the age of

20, and yet has an emotional maturity and musical sophistication way beyond his years. Metrically, the piece is written in a compelling 12/8 (four groups of three beats) and has can be interpreted with quite a flexible rhythmic feel, particularly from bar 32 to the end where the score is unmeasured (rubato) allowing freedom in performance.

Structurally the piece can be thought of as two contrasting sections, A and B (each getting more elaborate with each repetition) and an extended end section, or Coda: A sections: bars 1-4, 5-8, 13-16 and 21-24, B section: Bars 9-12 and 17-20, and the Coda bars: 25-34. Knowing this structure will help with performance, understanding the piece and memorisation. As ever, careful, patient work is the fastest way to getting this piece under your hands, so use the tab captions and enjoy the process of practising. Good luck, and see you next month with another masterpiece arranged for the guitar. 

TECHNIQUE FOCUS

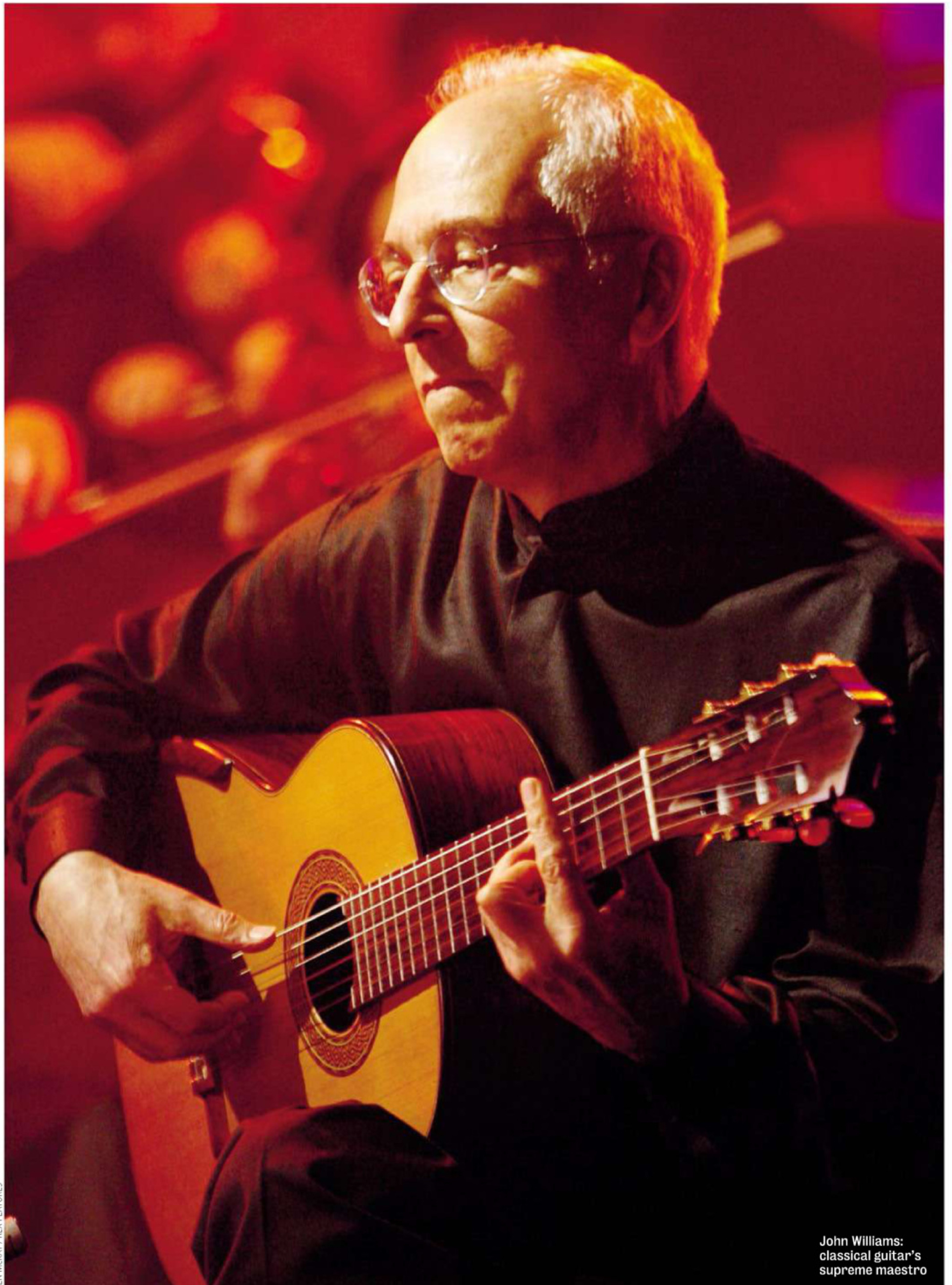
PLUCKING HAND FINGERNAILS

A key component to classical guitar playing is the use of plucking hand fingernails for creating a clear tone that projects well. The nails of the thumb and first three fingers (not the fourth finger) need to be a reasonable length, slightly beyond the end of the fingertips, shaped and filed. The nail shape should follow the edge of the fingertip with a slight downward slant on the left side for right-handed players. The edge of the nail needs to be smoothly filed and polished with a fine buffer or nail paper. When plucking, there should be simultaneous contact of fingertip flesh and side of the nail on the string and the nail acts as a ramp for the string to glide across - the end result being a clear bright tone!

THE ART ARCHIVE / ALAMY



TRACK RECORD Try Vladimir Horowitz's *Chopin, Volume 4: The 21 Nocturnes* (2011 MusiKazoo). Here the virtuoso pianist Horowitz gives an authoritative performance of Nocturne in Eb Major. Catherine Manoukian's *Chopin On Violin* (1999 Marquis Classics) offers an outstanding version on violin. The virtuoso guitarist John Williams has also played many of Chopin's great pieces.



KEN MCKAY / REX FEATURES

John Williams:
classical guitar's
supreme maestro

»

PLAYING TIPS

CD TRACK 23

[General] If you listen to any piano version of this piece you will hear that there is rarely any strict tempo involved; rubato - expressive pulling and pushing of the rhythm - is used throughout and will be apparent in virtually every phrase. The metronome speed therefore is a rough guide and not to be taken too literally.

[Bars 1-6] For the melody line with arpeggio accompaniment I recommend the use of rest stroke in the upper melody notes (strong, warm notes) and free stroke

in the arpeggio accompaniment (best for busy string crossing). This is not always possible but is a technique to aspire to. Take your time with the quintuplet in bar 2 - there is no need to rush this. On the third quaver (high G#) of beat 2 in the same bar I used a 'hinge bar' (pressed the G# with side of the first finger) in order to pivot across to the bass note F# without hopping said finger and therefore producing a smoother transition to the third beat. The same thing occurs in bar 6.

♩ = 105
Andante

Chords: E, Am6/E, Eadd9, E/D#, C#7, C#/E, C#7/F#, F#m, B7, G#/B#, C#m, A#dim7, B, B7, E, Am6/E, Am6, C, Eadd9, E/D#, C#7, C#7/F#, F#m, B7, G#/B#, C#m, A#dim7, B, B7, E, B, B6, F#/A#, A, Am6, E

PLAYING TIPS

CD TRACK 23

[Bar 5, previous page] Here's an embellished version of the first four bars including a couple of mordents: this short squiggle above the notation indicates a rapid alternation between the note on the score and the note above it, like a trill. The first example of this therefore goes: F# G# F# in a single fretting hand slur. This is a common device used in Classical, Romantic and Baroque styles.

[Bar 7, previous page] The trill combined with the arpeggio accompaniment is

difficult to coordinate. I found getting the third finger firmly fretted down on the D# at the start of the bar to be helpful. If this doesn't work for you and it proves too awkward, leave out the trill - it won't be the end of the world!

[Bar 9, previous page] At the start of bar 9 a 2nd fret barre is required; barres are also needed in bars 11 & 12. Hopefully this should be clear, as should the fingering for much of the next section, which is largely repeated from bar 13.

Chord progression: Fdim7, Fdim11, Fdim7, F#, Gm, C#m, F#13, B, C7/Bb, F/A, C#/G#, F#7, B7

11

Chord progression: E, Am/E, Am, Eadd9, E, E/D#, C#7, C#7/F#, F#m

13

Chord progression: B7, G#/B#, C#m, A#dim7, B, B9, B7b9, B, E

15

Chord progression: B, B6, B, F#/A#, A, Am6, E

17

Chord progression: Fdim7, Fdim11, Fdim7, F#, Gm, C#m, F#13, B, C7/Bb, F/A, C#/G#, F#7, B7

19

PLAYING TIPS

CD TRACK 23

[Bar 16, previous page] The rhythm in bar 16 needs to be taken with a huge pinch of salt; this is simply an embellishment of what happened previously in

bars 4 and 8. It is fine to play it fairly free and make it sound improvised. There is a similar scenario in bar 24 (this page).

Chords: E, Am/E, Am, Eadd9, E, E/D#, C#7, C#7/F#, F#m

21

Chords: B7, G#7/B#, C#m, A#dim7, B, B9, E

23

Chords: Am/E, Am6/E, E, Am/E, Am6/E, E

25

Chords: B/E, B7/E, E, F#9/A#, B7b9, B7, B6, E

27

Chords: Am/E, Am6/E, E, Am, E, A#dim11, A#dim

29

PLAYING TIPS

CD TRACK 23

[Bar 32 to end] The final section from bar 32 to 34 really drops tempo altogether - hence the instruction 'senza tempo' meaning 'without tempo'. This part is reminiscent of a concerto cadenza where the orchestra stops and the soloist

'improvises' a solo before bringing back the original tempo (bar 35) to bring the piece to a close. I really hope you enjoy learning this fantastic piece, as it is incredibly rewarding once learnt!

31

B7b9 G#B# C#m F#A# B7b9

33

Freetime

senza tempo

34

rall



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