

Mozart

Piano Concerto No.21 Andante



Bridget Mermikides continues her classical series with a transcription of Mozart's famous 'Elvira Madigan' as used in the classic Swedish film tragedy of the same name.

ABILITY RATING

● ● ● ● ● **Advanced**

| INFO | WILL IMPROVE YOUR |
|-------------------------|--|
| KEY: E | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fretting-hand stamina |
| TEMPO: 62 bpm | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Finger/hand independence |
| CD: Tracks 37-38 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Classical repertoire |

THIS ISSUE WE return to the work of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) and adapt another of his masterpieces to the classical guitar. We tackled his fiery keyboard work Rondo Alla Turca (GT171) and the sublime Clarinet Concerto in GT187, and this month present you with an arrangement of the stunning slow movement of his Piano Concerto No. 21 in C Major K.467.

Completed in 1785, at the ripe age of 29, this piece is considered amongst the composer's finest and indeed of the whole classical canon. By this time Mozart had already composed an amazing body of work including 36 symphonies, 35 concerti for one, two and three pianos, bassoon, violin, flute, harp and horn, 16 operas and hundreds of other works - so his technical prowess, command of orchestration and creative force were clearly established by this point, and evident in this stunning work.

Piano Concerto No. 21 is a work in three movements, and here we take the middle,

“Although not particularly fast, this is a very challenging arrangement to perform, as it requires a lot of fretting-hand stamina and control”




Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Andante movement - describing its gentle tempo - and transpose it down a semitone to E, to better suit the guitar. The movement is best known in isolation - sometimes called Elvira Madigan after the 1967 Swedish film and also taken as the inspiration for Neil Diamond's hit, Song Sung Blue. The Andante section itself is in three sections: a serene opening stating the exquisite main theme (bars 1-22), after which the piano is featured playing the theme and interpreting it through a series of cleverly approached keys (Bars 23-72).

The final section from Bar 73 restates and

elaborates the theme in the key of G in this arrangement, finding its way to the original tonality (E minor here in Bar 84), which transforms almost magically into the original key of E major in bar 88. Understanding the piece in terms of the thematic material, the three sections and the key areas really helps in performance and retention. What is extraordinary in Mozart's writing is how he manages to present melodies with an almost child-like simplicity while delivering harmony and compositional unity of such sophistication that it transcends the musical era of his generation.

This arrangement condenses the orchestral accompaniment and piano part to one guitar but I've aimed to preserve the integrity of this poignant piece. Although not particularly fast, this is a very challenging arrangement to perform, requiring a lot of fretting-hand stamina and fingerstyle control in separating and balancing the melody and accompaniment. So, as ever, seek to enjoy the patient learning process and you'll earn a piece in your repertoire that you can play for years to come. See you next month. 

TECHNIQUE FOCUS

FREE STROKE, REST STROKE

Two common picking techniques in classical guitar are free stroke and rest stroke. With rest stroke the picking finger plucks a string and then comes to rest against the adjacent one. With the thumb this is the next string down (towards the floor) and with fingers it's the next string up (towards the face). With free stroke the finger doesn't rest on an adjacent string after plucking, but floats free until it's required to pick again. Rest stroke is often favoured for single note playing, while free stroke is for polyphonic playing (chords and arpeggios).



TRACK RECORD To hear the original instrumentation of the arrangement, which is always best, you can't do better than Decca's 1991 András Schiff Piano Concertos Nos 21 & 20 CD. For a famous adaptation of a Mozart piece for guitar, try Fernando Sor's Introduction & Variations On A Theme Of Mozart. Julian Bream's version, on '93's Gold Seal Music of Spain Guitarra CD, is a classic.

PLAYING TIPS

[General] The triplet accompaniment is set up in the first bar and the tempo should be maintained as well as possible throughout the whole piece. The melody begins in bar 2 and should stand out a little from the accompaniment with the use of rest stroke while the accompaniment notes are played free stroke. For the first few bars the plucking hand fingering is indicated and this way of organising the plucking should continue from there on; wherever possible aim to keep the three fingers covering the top three strings and the thumb on the bass strings. The melody/accompaniment independence may take some practice.

CD TRACK 38

[Bar 8] At bar 8 the melody crosses the accompaniment in a two-against-three rhythm - a feature seen many times throughout the piece. At bar 13 there is an awkward stretch for the fretting hand plus another one at bar 14. If the latter stretch proves too difficult lower the 10th fret to the 9th fret (fourth string); the harmony will not be quite so rich but will still be acceptable. A barre at the 2nd fret is needed at bar 16. Follow the indicated fretting hand fingering for a sustained descending line in same bar. In bar 17 comes the lovely descending melody line, which needs to sound legato (smooth) and tranquil.

Musical score for guitar, featuring a treble clef and a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The tempo is marked as $\text{♩} = 62$ approx. The score is divided into four systems, each containing a guitar staff and a bass staff. The guitar staff includes chord names (E, E/G#, E/B, B7sus#4, B7, E, E7/G#, Asus2, A, A#dim7, Em/B, B7b9, B7/A, Emadd9/B, Em/B, B7b9, B/F#, B7/F#, Em/B, Em) and fret numbers. The bass staff includes fret numbers and a rhythmic notation (0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11). The score is written in a style that suggests a specific playing technique, possibly a fingerstyle or a specific strumming pattern, as indicated by the repeated use of the number 3 in the bass staff.

PLAYING TIPS

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[Bar 23] The main theme is repeated and is where the solo piano begins in Mozart's original score. The material is the same here until bar 33 where it resolves to B major (minor first time round) and then we get the cadence back to

E at 35. Two bars later we modulate to E's relative minor, C#m. Here the melody becomes more animated - the grace notes at the beginning of bar 39 should occur before the beat - before becoming sparse and tender going into bar 41.

B \sharp dim7 C \sharp m7 B B7/A E/G \sharp A F \sharp m E/B E/A E/B B7

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

19

[illegible]

25

The musical score for "The Wind" by The Beatles, featuring guitar and bass parts. The guitar part is in E major and includes a solo section. The bass part is in E major and includes a solo section. The score is for a 12-string guitar and a 6-string bass.

PLAYING TIPS

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[Bar 45] We kick back into the triplet accompaniment and for five bars we have changing harmony over an F# pedal bass which resolves to B major at bar 50, with the lovely descending melody repeated again at bar 53. This descending line (A#, G#, F#, E) has been fingered: first, second, first, second string, but could also

be played with the first three notes on the first string (the bass note E would have to go the fourth string). The latter way is more stretchy but may be a smoother option for some players. Either way it's a challenge to find perfect fingerings that are easily playable, when transposing from one instrument to another.

The musical score is presented in a system of five staves, each representing a guitar string (E, B, G, D, A, E from top to bottom). The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, slurs, and dynamic markings. Chord changes are indicated above the staff, including Asus2, A, A#dim7, E/B, B, B/F#, B/D#, E, E/G#, E/B, E/G#, D#dim7, G#7, C#m, C#m/G#, G#7, C#m, B7, E, E/B, B/D#, B/F#, B, C7b5, C#m/G#, C#m/E, C#m/E#, C#m/G#, C#m/E#, C#7, F#, Bm/F#, Bm, and F#7b9. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 on the staff and 0-9 on the guitar strings. The score is divided into measures, with bar numbers 31, 34, 37, 40, and 43 marked at the beginning of their respective systems.

PLAYING TIPS

CD TRACK 38

[Bar 55] We have landed on the dominant key of B major and from there we go through a number of harmonic progressions with a fretboard leap to an 8th fret barre in bar 60 for the G#/B# shifting back to a barre at the 4th fret for C#m in the next bar. At bar 62 we reach A major where the melody is more prominent

for a few bars then at 66 we reach a series of ascending arpeggios. Consider your fingering carefully here. The main original theme is reintroduced at bar 73, in the key of G major this time with more embellishment - take your time with this and perhaps listen to recordings of good pianists for stylistic phrasing.

Bm/F# F#7 E#dim/F#
 F#7 B/D# E C#m F#5 F#7sus4 F#sus4 F#
 F#dim7 G#m G#m/F# F#7/E B/D# B E C#m F#5 F#7sus4/E F#sus4 F#
 B B7/D# G#dim Bm G#dim G#dim/F# C#7/E# C#7/G# C#7 C#7/E#
 F#m F#m/E D7 F#m/C# G#m/B# G# G#7 G#7/D#

PLAYING TIPS

CD TRACK 38

[Bar 65] For beat 1, use your fourth finger for the E, and then fingers two, four, three and two to perform the quick ornamentation on the second string.

Chord progression: C#m, E7/B, E7, A, Esus4/B, E7/G#, E7/B

Staff 1 (Treble Clef): Musical notation for measures 61-63. Measure 61 has a triplet of eighth notes (E, G, B). Measure 62 has a triplet of eighth notes (E, G, B). Measure 63 has a triplet of eighth notes (E, G, B).

Staff 2 (Bass Clef): Fingering for measures 61-63. Measure 61: 5, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6. Measure 62: 9, 9, 9, 9, 7, 7. Measure 63: 6, 7, 5, 6, 6, 6.

Chord progression: E7, A, G#dim7, G#dim7/B, G#dim7/E#

Staff 1 (Treble Clef): Musical notation for measures 64-66. Measure 64 has a triplet of eighth notes (E, G, B). Measure 65 has a triplet of eighth notes (E, G, B). Measure 66 has a triplet of eighth notes (E, G, B).

Staff 2 (Bass Clef): Fingering for measures 64-66. Measure 64: 10, 7, 9, 5, 3. Measure 65: 5, 3, 5, 3, 2, 3. Measure 66: 2, 3, 5, 5, 5, 5.

Chord progression: F#m/A, F#m/C#, F#m, F#dim7, F#dim7/A, F#dim7/C, Em/G, Em/B, Em

Staff 1 (Treble Clef): Musical notation for measures 67-69. Measure 67 has a triplet of eighth notes (E, G, B). Measure 68 has a triplet of eighth notes (E, G, B). Measure 69 has a triplet of eighth notes (E, G, B).

Staff 2 (Bass Clef): Fingering for measures 67-69. Measure 67: 9, 10, 11, 7, 6, 7. Measure 68: 8, 8, 10, 5, 4, 7. Measure 69: 7, 0, 0, 0, 8, 7.

Chord progression: C7, B, G/B, D7/A

Staff 1 (Treble Clef): Musical notation for measures 70-72. Measure 70 has a triplet of eighth notes (E, G, B). Measure 71 has a triplet of eighth notes (E, G, B). Measure 72 has a triplet of eighth notes (E, G, B).

Staff 2 (Bass Clef): Fingering for measures 70-72. Measure 70: 7, 6, 8, 7, 0. Measure 71: 5, 4, 2, 4, 3, 4. Measure 72: 0, 1, 0, 0, 3, 1.

Chord progression: G, D7/F#

Staff 1 (Treble Clef): Musical notation for measures 73-75. Measure 73 has a triplet of eighth notes (E, G, B). Measure 74 has a triplet of eighth notes (E, G, B). Measure 75 has a triplet of eighth notes (E, G, B).

Staff 2 (Bass Clef): Fingering for measures 73-75. Measure 73: 3, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4. Measure 74: 10, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0. Measure 75: 4, 5, 5, 3, 3, 3.

PLAYING TIPS

CD TRACK 38

[Bar 83] We have the same five-bar sequence (harmonically) as at bar 12, again with slightly awkward stretches in bars 84 and 85.

Keep the long melody notes sustaining over the accompanying chords by keeping them held down for their full duration.

PLAYING TIPS

CD TRACK 38

[Bar 98] For the trill on beat 3, play the F# and quickly hammer-on and pull-off repeatedly with a higher G# (9th fret, second string) using your third finger: a trill always involves a diatonic second higher than the notated note.

E/G# E A F#m E/B F#7/A# Bsus4 B7 E D#E E E6
 E B G D A E
 91

E7/G# E7/B E7/G# A Am A A#4 A#dim7
 E B G D A E
 94

E/B B7 E E/G# E/B
 E B G D A E
 97

B B/F# B B7 E E/G# E/B E/G# E
 E B G D A E
 100

B B/F# B B7 E E/G# E/B E/G# E
 E B G D A E
 102