

# technique: acoustic master

## On the CD

**TRACK 37**

First verse – slowly

**TRACK 38**

Chorus section – slowly

**TRACK 39**

Horn section – slowly

**TRACK 40**

Solo section – slowly

**TRACK 41**

Bars 84-87 – slowly

**TRACK 42**The whole of *Classical Gas*, as shown in the notation*Classical guitar: Kit Morgan*

# Classical Gas

## MASON WILLIAMS

As we've all gathered by now, *Classical Gas* was made famous by **Mason Williams**. **KIT MORGAN** is on the case (the, er, guitar case) with a complete transcription and CD recording.

**T**HIS was Mason Williams' one hit from the '60s. The original had an enormous orchestral production, so I've reduced it to a solo guitar piece, and this should have the added bonus of tidying up some of those right-hand weaknesses in your fingerstyle!

### INTRO & MAIN THEME

The theme is a 4-bar pattern, played four times through. Note the slight variations in the fourth bar of each pattern (bars 14 and 18), and the unexpected time signature changes, which are made harder to follow by some cunning dashed accents – if reading isn't your forte, it might be easier to learn these phrases parrot-fashion.

### CHORUS

We're in 4/4 again, so keep the bass notes even and watch for the 'tied' phrasing in the melody. Try to plot out which melody notes are 'with' a bass note and which are 'between' bass notes. Don't relax too much because we're back to tricky time signatures again in bar 42. Do learn these rather than count them, or you'll lose rhythmic feel.

### THE WELL-DODGY HORNS BIT

Notice that the A bass note continues underneath the melody (as played by the horns on the original) despite the fact that the melody is suddenly in Db! It then repeats the phrase up a minor third (E

major) before another flurry of accents and time signatures. This section does feel odd, so you may be forgiven for leaving it out altogether in the interest of good taste!

### SOLO SECTION

It's important to keep the bass notes even here, despite what your other fingers are doing – note the clever phrasing at bars 63 and 64. The notes are grouped in threes, as are the accents, tricking the listener into a 3/4 lilt, when the time signature stays in 4/4. At bar 74 the chord structure is the same as the main theme, but each chord is given one beat instead of two. This builds tension and leads neatly into another chorus.

At bar 86 (the end of the second chorus) you'll notice the horrific-looking demi-semiquaver arpeggiation. To play this flamenco-style section, run your thumb across the strings from the fifth to the second string then immediately strike the open first string with the first finger and run it back up the strings to the fifth.

### CODA FROM HELL

Yes, it's a phrasing nightmare. The piece has been in A minor almost throughout, but the last chord is A major. This is called a *Tierce de Picardie*, and it's a trick commonly used by writers who want to be seen as serious classical composers – or perhaps it's just that they like happy endings? **TG**



Mason Williams as he looks today – check out his transcription book, also entitled *Classical Gas*, available from IMP.

## MASON WILLIAMS: Classical Gas

## CD TRACKS 37-42 »

### Intro:

freely



3 2 0

6 7 8 9 10

2.jpg

CD TRACKS 37-42

## acoustic master: technique

» MASON WILLIAMS: Classical Gas (cont...) «

CD TRACKS 37-42 »

Main theme

a tempo  $\text{♩} = 156$

11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26



**Chorus:**



3.jpg

# CD TRACKS 37-42 **technique: acoustic master**

» MASON WILLIAMS: Classical Gas (cont...) »

CD TRACKS 37-42 »

**Horn Section:**





**Solo Section:**

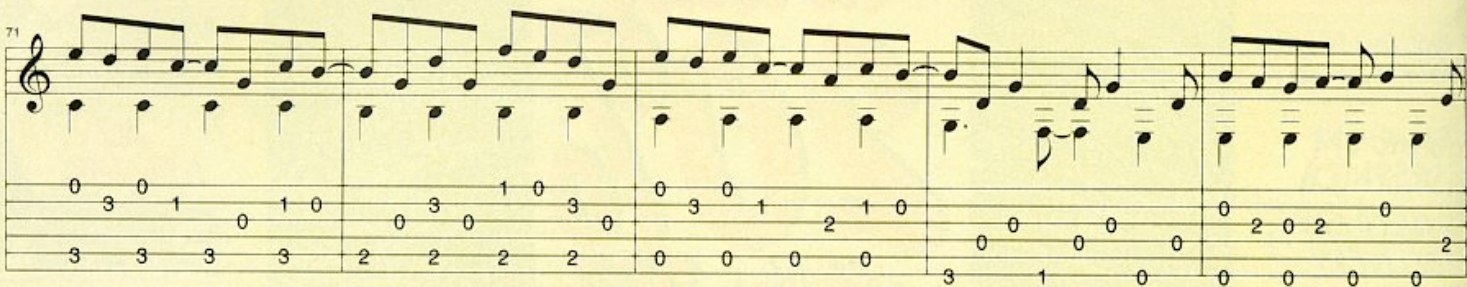


4.jpg



» **MASON WILLIAMS: Classical Gas (cont...)**

**CD TRACKS 37-42 »**



**Chorus:**



76

81

86

D.S. al Coda

90

Coda

95

Slight ral. -----