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CHITARRA POLIFONICA

(Virtuosismo tecnico sulla chitarra)

BÈRBEN

PREFAZIONE

Notiamo con piacere l'aumento del numero di coloro che si sono resi conto che, per poter suonare la chitarra con maestria, lo sviluppo di una tecnica sicura è tanto necessario quanto lo è riguardo al violino o al pianoforte — per non nominare che due altri strumenti musicali.

Nelle nostre altre sei opere didattiche (*Esercizi essenziali per la mano sinistra / Arpeggi per la mano destra / Le scale diatoniche / Riscoperta dell'accordatura e della tastiera / Imitando il granchio / Capriccio scioglidita*) e in questa pubblicazione, lo studente troverà gli elementi fondamentali che, praticati con costanza ed intelligenza, dovrebbero dargli la possibilità di aver risolto anticipatamente le difficoltà tecniche che potrebbero esistere in qualsiasi musica composta per il nostro strumento.

PREFACE

It is with pleasure we notice an increase in the number of people who have realised that to play the guitar masterfully, the development of a sound technique is as necessary as it is regarding the violin or the pianoforte — to name but two other musical instruments.

Combined with our six other didactic works (Essential exercises for the left hand / Arpeggios for the right hand / The diatonic scales / Tuning and fingerboard rediscovered / Crab-fingerings / Warming-up capriccio), the present book will provide the student with the fundamental elements that, when constantly and intelligently practised, should prepare him for anticipatively solving the technical difficulties that may exist in any music composed for our instrument.



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DO NOT WASTE THE BEAUTIFUL

"You are not to take up That Finger, which you last Stopt, until necessity require." (Thomas Mace) *This direction, almost commandment, addressed to lutenists, is valid for us too. In other words: possibly, do not interrupt a note if it is still useful.*

When we play on the guitar a succession of notes, which may be single or more than one at a time, the notes run into each other or coexist. A piece of music sounds different not only if it is performed by another person (when two do the same thing it is never the same thing!) but even when it is repeated by the same person. Each time it is something peerless because the notes are sustained in a different manner; not to speak also of the means of expression (p., f., dim., cresc., rall., accel. and rubato), a few of which, in some degree, are never missing. It is as if one re-writes one's own signature, or repeats a phrase uttering by voice: even if the author is recognisable, they will always be different things. This is why live music is always more interesting than the recorded one, which once heard is no more surprising.

While in chord successions excluding open strings (with continuous use of barring) the notes may not blend, in the usual musical works the difference between what we read and what we listen to is always considerable, unless the performer, by using absurd fingerings, impedes the blending of the notes and annuls the phenomenon of sympathetically vibrating strings (this is not the occasion of explaining it). Endeavours of this sort, however, make the guitar sound unnatural. Trying for instance to avoid the pleasant and typically guitaristic effects as the one occurring at the close of measure 7, part IV, when quite five notes are sounding, is wrong.

To learn when and for how long the notes should be kept sounding, after theory of music study also harmony. He who thinks that harmony is useful only to future composers is mistaken; to become a good musician this discipline is indispensable.

The art of playing improves if one takes the habit of listening attentively and with a critical ear to the quality and duration of one's own notes.

To favour legato between notes produced on one string: A) starting from the lower, hold it at least until the higher is sounded. B) starting from the higher, possibly prepare the lower before leaving the higher.

At times, despite the technical progress, the insufficiently involved ear gets accustomed to the sounds of mediocre quality, comprising interruptions, and ends by considering the state of things normal and satisfactory.

Read books about interpretation, composers, conductors, musical forms, great instrumentalists, acoustics, instruments, luthiers, etc. One never knows too much. Listen to good singers and good instrumentalists, observing their way of phrasing.

It is not sufficient to have a good ear, though nothing can substitute for this gift which starts developing since early childhood. The theoretical studies are, to be sure, necessary as they allow us to analyse and understand the works we wish to play; if the musical structure is not clear in the performer's mind (which is evidenced by his interpretation), the

listener will be unable to appreciate the work. How can we explain something that we ourselves have not first understood? The musician either listens with interest and pleasure or gets bored, distracted, irritated. As Aaron Copland rightly wrote: unless the hearing of the music first stirs the executant it is unlikely to move an audience.

INTERPRETATION AND MORE

"[Beginners must learn strict time; but] when we come to be Masters, so that we can command all manner of Time, at our own Pleasures; we Then take Liberty, (and very often, for Humour [i.e. "mood", not "wit"], and good Adornment-sake, in certain Places), to Break Time; sometimes Faster, and sometimes Slower, as we perceive, the Nature of the Thing Requires." (Thomas Mace)

"Certain notes and rests should be prolonged beyond their written length, for reasons of expression." (Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach)

"You must not forget to attack the middle [syncopated] note more strongly." (Leopold Mozart)

"We have come to understand that intuition alone, so glorified by the romantics, is not sufficient and that it is necessary to sustain it with knowledge. (...) Breathings and cesuras, especially those that precede a beginning, have a positive value equal to that of the notes themselves. (...) To cut the melodic line with cesuras required by logic, impetus, fantasy, and to allow air to circulate is like breathing a constantly renewed life into musical phrases; it gives them a relief indispensable to their comprehension. This is why all ancient treatises compare musical interpretation to eloquence. (...) Only a legato obtained through good fingering can give relief to the voices we wish to set off. The need for absolute legato in all the voices, but especially the inner ones, becomes more and more imperative for me. I upset all fingerings; I expose my hands to tortures to obtain it. (...) Fingering more than anything else is a question of the individual structure of the hand, of its being chubby or lean and bony; it also depends on the degree of sensitivity of the tip of the fingers and the rapport of this sensitivity with the organism as a whole. Certain principles of fingering are axiomatic. They can and must be taken into consideration by every keyboardist. But between that and a standardization for all hands and especially for all natures, there is an abyss. (...) There is a fundamental error in the manner of practising. It consists in always starting a phrase at its beginning and going up to its end. To know a phrase in all its detail one must be able to pick it up at any place. As a preparation for this method of practising, it is essential to write out fingerings to serve as guide marks. (...) The tempo of a piece should be based on the speed that allows playing with ease and clarity the shortest note values to be found in that piece. (...) I attack even difficult pieces in their definitive tempo without transition, even if this tempo is very fast. I assimilate it, and only later do I work slowly. (...) The

task of a teacher is not to work for the pupil nor to oblige him to work, but to show him how to work." (Wanda Landowska)

"It is my conviction that we often compromise tempo-wise, according to our technical equipment: we play fast when this comes easier to us, we play too slowly when this flatters our innate tendencies, our tone production, for instance. (...) Albert Schweitzer already remarked upon this tendency in his Bach biography, written in 1905, when he said that Bach's Andantes are generally played too slowly and the Allegros too fast. It really amounts to this: it is our instrumental idiosyncrasies that too often determine our tempi. That is we 'think' and sing (or rather: hum, or whistle, or grunt) a movement away from our instrument often more correctly than when we play it. Conductors have this advantage over us: I have seen one of our great ones sit at his table away from the piano, pocket score and metronome before him and he — decides..." (Joseph Szigeti)

"I would definitely recommend that everybody who studies music should spend at least half an hour a day copying some music. Eventually, he would do it very quickly. (...) I also think that every musician should try to compose, even if he is so disgusted with the results that he destroys every composition immediately after he has written it. That does not matter. It is the activity and not the result which is so important." (Artur Schnabel)

"It is a great mistake for a teacher to impose his own interpretation upon all of his students. From an early age in the student's development the teacher should try to encourage a personal initiative while at the same time constantly strive to better the student's understanding and to improve his taste and sense of style. The teacher must always bear in mind that the highest goal should be for him to make the student self-sufficient. The parrot method is not conducive to such a result. As Kreisler once said: too much teaching can be worse than too little." (Ivan Galamian)

"From early lessons the student is made aware of the significance of the phrase and the subtle balancing of phrases by use of carefully controlled tonal contrasts, graded intensities, rhythmic accentuation and artistic deviations of time. It is remarkable too that skilled teachers can develop quite easily in their pupils a sense of style. As in speech, so in music, interpretation at the highest level involves a feeling for the effects to be gained from well-calculated pauses and periods of silence." (H. Lowery)

"The study of elementary harmony is of vital importance to every talented music student. (...) We continue to experiment with fingering until it feels comfortable. (...) Whenever possible, use fingering to improve legato. (...) Make a piece sound right, regardless of the means required to achieve this end. (...) Never choose tradition over the indications in the original score. Tradition is a much-abused word; Toscanini defined it as the last bad performance." (Ruth Slenczynska)

"I realize that the phrase 'in the true tradition' is at best a shaky one. For there is no positive proof that my conception of the 'true tradition' is the really true one." (Aaron Copland)

TECHNIQUE

Right hand

Some beginners think that the right hand has a less difficult task than the left. This erroneous opinion is due to the fact that for the elementary first lessons the fingers of the left hand (our weakest hand) must press the strings vigorously and separatedly, when they still lack the necessary force and independence. In that same period of studies, the right hand (our best hand) has to do relatively easier things.

Man, however, guided by instinct and intelligence, has always used his best hand for the most delicate and difficult part of any work requiring both hands. The left-handed strike a match with their most able hand, the left. The left-handed violinists hold the bow with their best hand, the left. Unfortunately for them, they cannot be engaged by an orchestra; this is why you rarely see them, but they do exist.

Had the pressing of the strings on the fretboard been the most difficult part of the labour, we would have done like the left-handed Paul McCartney of the celebrated Beatles: inverted the position of the strings and the instrument, pressed with the right hand and plucked with the left — but it is not so.

When studying, have at hand pencil and rubber. Try a short passage, find with which finger it is better to start it and annotate the fingering. Do not rely upon chance for the solution. At the beginning everything should be reasoned and analysed. Later, after several slow repetitions, the motions become automatic.

The rest stroke should be well mastered and used whenever it is convenient; for instance for the marked notes of the last sixteen measures of part V.

Left hand

FINGERS — *With correct and methodic training the fingers gain in strength and independence. When these essential qualities are lacking, with the moving of the other fingers a finger that ought to go on pressing is either lifted or ceases to press though it stays on the string. The obvious consequence of such defects is sound interruption. Since the finger joints are flexible, see that they break outward; in other words: when pressing with the extremity of a finger avoid backward bending (as seen from its external side) of the joint nearest the nail; this happens either when the finger is not strong enough or because of the erroneous positions of the fingertip, the hand and the wrist.*

THUMB — *It has a most important role and should always be kept, as it were, at the center of gravity of the place of action. It should not come into view over the higher edge of the fingerboard nor point leftwards, towards the head of the guitar. On passing*

to a higher position do not leave it anchored at the previous one but bring it forward with the hand.

WRIST — An example of good position: placed on the fourth string, 1 on E and 4 on G, must both be arched (as the brackets of the parenthesis), without touching the third string. To make things easier for the small finger, turn slightly the hand as if it were attracted by the sounding-board. No part of the palm should come in contact with the lower edge of the fingerboard.

STRETCHINGS — In some stretched out holds, with a note too distant for the fourth finger to reach easily, we note the unavoidable flattening of its joint between the first and second phalanx, the nearest to the hand. Excepting these rare cases (still more rare for the other fingers), when the position of the wrist is correct the small finger can always be used arched.

Some technical solutions to remember:

a) the shift with a finger which, interrupting the pressure, slides on the string, as silently as possible, without losing entirely contact with it;

b) sometimes it is possible not to lift a finger from a note that is needed also shortly after;

c) the fingers are often placed on the notes ahead of the time of sounding.

FINGERING

The technical solutions being numerous, fingering is just a hint. No technical principle is applied rigidly and everywhere.

To have played for sometime a passage with a certain fingering does not exclude the possibility of changing it. With experience, grown knowledge and development of taste, more than once you feel that a fingering is no more adequate. Try then better solutions without getting disheartened. It is preferable to avoid unreasonably elaborate fingerings. Sometimes, after years of practice, we find a simple fingering which is more efficient than a complicated one. Use all fingers, alternating them and taking advantage of each. Having well considered the needs of phrasing and articulation, check that every finger stays on the string the maximum allowed. The ear, which for what concerns music is the only judge, perceives when it is time to interrupt a note before causing unpleasant dissonances. The matter, however, is subjective; indeed, not all agree about when there is dissonance.

Some 5/6 bars have been used to allow the third phalanx not to abandon the bass when the first and second phalanxes are lifted.

Remember always Mace's first direction because only a few of the notes to sustain and of the fingers not to lift have been shown by dashes.

MUSIC

LEFT PAGES: for advanced guitarists, integral or rhythmic writing, analogous to the one used in lute tablature; it shows the moment the notes must be

sounded, leaving what regards their effective duration to the player's discretion, theoretical and technical preparedness, besides musicalness. When correctly performed, any left page sounds like its corresponding right one.

RIGHT PAGES: fingered, for the less advanced, interpretative or polyphonic writing, with parts. However, also this writing is approximate for, as regards the polyphonic instruments, even if we use all the note values, the dot, the tie and the rests, it is impossible to fix on paper with absolute accuracy what one day, with the contribution of the talent, the whim and mood of an artist, will be translated into ineffable sounds. Fortunately, those who know the theory of music are able to understand and interpret a composer's thought.

INSTRUCTIONS

Left hand

PART I

— Measure 11: hold first E

— Measure 13: hold first B

— Measure 26: hold E (fourth string)

PART II

— Measure 24: hold appoggiatura D #

PART III

— Measure 17: press G and F # simultaneously

— Measure 19: press F # and E # simultaneously

PART IV

— Measure 5: press F # beforehand

— Measure 7: press D # and following F # beforehand

— Measure 15: hold C #

— Measure 24: hold D #

PART VI

— Measure 13: do not send hand leftwards more than necessary

— Measure 14: place quickly thumb under fret 2

— Measure 15: place quickly thumb under fret 3

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1

Allegro

The musical score consists of eight staves of music, all written in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. The notation is polyphonic, with multiple voices on each staff. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature (C). The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together, and includes various chordal textures. The second staff has a bass clef and a common time signature (C). The third staff has a treble clef and a common time signature (C). The fourth staff has a treble clef and a common time signature (C). The fifth staff has a treble clef and a common time signature (C). The sixth staff has a treble clef and a common time signature (C). The seventh staff has a treble clef and a common time signature (C). The eighth staff has a treble clef and a common time signature (C). The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

I

Allegro

The musical score consists of ten staves of music in G major (one sharp). The tempo is marked 'Allegro'. The notation includes various guitar-specific techniques and fingerings:

- Staff 1:** Starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. It features a melodic line with a 'II' fingering above the first measure. A 'p' (piano) dynamic marking is present below the staff. Fingerings '2', '1', '2', '1', '2', '3' are indicated below the notes.
- Staff 2:** Continues the melodic line. It includes a '4' fingering above the first measure and a '4/6 II' fingering above the second measure. A 'p' dynamic marking is at the end.
- Staff 3:** Features a '3' fingering above the first measure and a 'II' fingering above the final measure.
- Staff 4:** Includes a 'II' fingering above the second measure and a 'II' fingering above the final measure. A long slur covers several measures.
- Staff 5:** Shows a '2' fingering below the second measure and a '3' fingering above the final measure.
- Staff 6:** Features a '3' fingering above the first measure and a 'II' fingering above the second measure.
- Staff 7:** Includes a '3' fingering above the first measure and a '4 2' fingering above the final measure.
- Staff 8:** Ends with a 'II' fingering above the second measure and a long slur covering the final measures.

2



II

The musical score consists of eight staves of music in G major (one sharp). The notation is polyphonic, with multiple voices on each staff. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4. Dynamic markings include 'p' (piano). The score includes guitar-specific symbols: a bar line with '0 2' below it, and another with a sharp sign and '0 2' below it. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

3



III

This musical score, titled "III", is a piece for guitar in G major and 5/6 time. It consists of nine staves of polyphonic notation. The notation is arranged in two systems of five staves each, with the final staff of the second system being a shorter line. The music features a complex interplay of voices, with various fingerings and techniques indicated by numbers (1-4), letters (m, i), and Roman numerals (I, II). The key signature has one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 5/6. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

4

This musical score is for guitar, written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of eight staves of music. The notation includes a variety of rhythmic values such as quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes, as well as rests. There are several instances of beamed eighth notes and sixteenth notes, often with slurs. The score features a mix of single notes and chords, with some chords appearing in the lower register. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots at the end of the eighth staff.

IV

Musical score for guitar, titled "IV". The score is written in treble clef, one sharp (F#), and 3/4 time. It consists of eight staves of music. The first staff begins with a repeat sign and a double bar line. The music includes various rhythmic values such as quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes, as well as rests. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-4 above notes. Dynamics like "p" (piano) are used. Chord diagrams are shown below the staff lines, with some notes marked with a "p" for plucked. The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

5

The image displays a musical score for guitar, consisting of eight staves of music. The key signature is G major, indicated by one sharp (F#). The music is written in a single melodic line on a treble clef. The notation includes various rhythmic values such as quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes, as well as rests. There are several instances of double sharps (F##) and double naturals (F) used as accidentals. The score begins with a repeat sign and ends with a double bar line and repeat dots. The eighth staff contains several notes with a 'v' symbol above them, likely indicating vibrato or a specific performance technique. The overall structure is a single melodic line with complex rhythmic patterns and chromatic alterations.

V

The musical score consists of eight staves of music, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notation includes various chords and fingerings:

- Staff 1: Starts with a double bar line. Fingerings: 3, 1, 4, m, 2, 4. Chords: $\frac{5}{6}I$, $\frac{5}{6}II$.
- Staff 2: Fingerings: 2, 1, 1. Chords: $\frac{5}{6}I$, $\frac{5}{6}II$.
- Staff 3: Fingerings: 3, 4. Chords: $\frac{5}{6}I$, $\frac{5}{6}II$.
- Staff 4: Fingerings: 4, 3. Chords: $\frac{5}{6}I$, $\frac{5}{6}II$.
- Staff 5: Chords: $\frac{5}{6}I$, $\frac{5}{6}II$.
- Staff 6: Chords: $\frac{5}{6}I$, $\frac{5}{6}II$.
- Staff 7: Chords: $\frac{5}{6}I$, $\frac{5}{6}II$.
- Staff 8: Chords: $\frac{5}{6}I$, $\frac{5}{6}II$.

6

This musical score, titled "6", is for guitar and is written in G major (one sharp). It consists of eight staves of music. The notation is primarily polyphonic, with multiple notes often beamed together to represent chords or complex textures. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. The music progresses through various chordal structures and melodic fragments across the eight staves, ending with a double bar line on the final staff.

VI

The musical score is written for guitar in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of nine staves of music. The notation includes treble clef, key signature (F#), and dynamic markings such as 'p'. The score features complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth notes, and includes fingering numbers (1-4) and slurs. A section labeled 'III' is indicated by a bracket over the sixth staff.