

I. Intermediate Method

Free Stroke

1. Here & Gone
2. Phoebe – Nicky
3. Sweeping Clean
4. Eastern Interlude
5. Jumping Jenny
6. Silkworm's Waltz
7. Winner Take All
8. Glowworm's Waltz
9. Peter's Prelude & Var.
10. Estudio in A Minor by Aguado
11. Allegretto by Carcassi
Variation by Luse
12. Theme & 4Var. by Carulli-
Luse – Peter
13. Estudio in G by Aguado
14. Estudio in D Minor by Sor
15. Tremolo Variation #2
16. Andante Doloroso by Carulli
– Peter
17. Hymn
18. Heilongjiang
19. Prelude in Seven-eight Time
20. Easy Winner
21. Gliding – Cheng Kit
22. Imitations
23. Waltz by Carcassi –
Cheng Kit
24. Viva Carulli!
25. Bookends Landler
26. Prelude in G – Roxana
27. Andante by Sor – Tan Tan
28. Red Bandana – Tan Tan



Rest Stroke

29. Allegro in D
30. Free'n Easy
31. Fizzing Finger #1 – Nicky
32. Daydreams
33. Con moto
34. Adagio con moto & Var.
35. Estudio Vivo – Nicky
36. Humoroso – Nicky
37. Clowns!
38. Cantabile non troppo – Peter
39. Cat and Canary – Tan Tan
40. Pastoral Dance – Arthur
41. Bagatelle – Arthur
42. A Wistful Tune
43. Viva Vivaldi! I
44. Viva Vivaldi! II
45. Annabel's Tune
46. Bittersweet Tune
47. Rag & Bones Rag

II. Advanced Method – Combined Strokes

Free Stroke

48. Allegro Comodo–Soo Wah
49. Valzer by Carulli – Soo Wah
50. Hazel's Walk – Soo Wah
51. Etude in B Minor by Sor

Rest Stroke

52. Lullaby – Tan Tan
53. Estudio cantabile – Roxana
54. Chloe – Hunter Mah
55. Lost Solent River – Hunter
56. Swingin' Warbler – Hunter

Combined Strokes

57. Rasgueo Variations (basic
rasgueo)
58. Wei Wanderers (advanced
rasgueo)
59. Lagrima by Tarrega
60. Sonatina by Paganini



Classic Guitar: Evolution by Fits and Starts

The classic guitar has not always been played both free stroke and rest stroke. Pedagogy developed during the early decades of the 19th century by the likes of Fernando Sor and Mauro Giuliani was based on the pinkie-braced right hand position, capable only of free stroke.

Guitarists such as Sor, Giuliani and Ferdinando Carulli were renaissance-like figures, pedagogue, performer and composer rolled into one. Although from Spain, Italy and France respectively, they composed in Viennese Classical style, particularly in the manner of keyboard works by Haydn and Mozart.

But Sor, Giuliani, Carulli and Dionisio Aguado faced stringent limitations. There was no precedent for sophisticated keyboard articulation on an instrument that had only recently changed over from courses – strings tuned in pairs – to single strings.

Sor expresses his frustration with the guitar of his day:

“I have always too much regretted that there was no method of giving more sound to the instrument, in order that I might occupy myself with the methods of diminishing it.”

(Sor Method, trans. A. Merrick: p.17)

Classical style remains current today, much the same as for Sor, Giuliani, Carulli, Aguado and Napoleon Coste. I am certain that these composers would have been *delighted*, not only that their music has survived, but that it can be now rendered with greater impact and stylistic fidelity on the modern guitar.

The twelve traditional studies included here

are interpreted according to what I think of as the *synergy of colluding principles*:

(1) Relying on expression marks employed in the composers mainstream works (chamber music, concertos, etc.) as well as a shared understanding of Classical style, I edit, perform and teach their music based on this question:

“Given the resources afforded by the modern guitar; how would Sor, Giuliani, Carulli, Aguado, Coste, and Kaspar Mertz have envisioned their music?”

(2) Music’s devoutly protean essence – the interplay between its oceanic depths and fickle surfaces – of course begets the second principle, the necessity for each generation to interpret the classics anew.

“Salon” Methodology

Reaching its peak during the 1820’s, the popularity of the guitar in European capitols then gradually waned. The instrument’s decline (one of several in its long history) is generally attributed to the seeds of Romanticism, a trend away from the intimacy of the drawing room, towards a grander stage.

That is history’s verdict. But I sense another problem lurking in the wings; one bound up with the socially pretentious manner in which the instrument apparently was taught: guitar as the “in thing” to do, the salon as the “place to be.”

The Carcassi Method – the last to appear before mid-century and the only 19th century Method to remain continuously in print, is transitional as regards to right hand technique. Pinkie bracing is replaced by a thumb stroke that “should slide to the next string and rest upon it.”

The non-progressive structure of 19th century method books seems nothing less than mind-boggling

today. Take Carcassi's "introductory" arpeggios, for instance. (Carl Fisher Ed., pp. 13 – 19). Beginning in such a difficult manner; it is hard to imagine which of the poor novice's hands would ache the most!

Not that there is anything wrong with the materials *per se*; it is all about their distribution. "Allegretto," on p. 21 epitomizes the problem of the right piece at the wrong time.

To play this delightful little Czerny-clone fluently, (item #11), students, particularly youngsters, require at least three years of study. So what of the dilettantes in the salon, attempting it during maybe the third *lesson*?

The Innovations of Torres and Tarrega

Though it flickered in Vienna, the guitar's torch was re-lit later in the century in Spain. Crafted in the workshop of a furniture maker named Antonio Torres, the modern guitar finally came of age. Torres' fan-braced guitar, larger and more powerful than its predecessors, opened the door to innovative playing technique by Francisco Tarrega.

Although little is known as to how Tarrega learned the guitar, we are all partly the end product of his innovations: (1) the un-supported right hand position and (2) rest stroke played with both fingers and thumb.

His "liberated" right hand position broke completely with prior technique. Unfortunately, it also proved unstable and tension-prone for beginners, particularly when attempted in combination with traditional free stroke methodology.

Fortunately, the new position combined somewhat more readily with rest stroke. Possibly inspired by gypsy *picado* technique, rest stroke is not only easier for beginners to learn than free stroke,

but is inherently more *powerful*. Enough so, that when augmented by the new Torres soundboard, Sor's vision of "a way to give more sound to the instrument" finally came to pass.

The down side was that there was little or no rest stroke music for beginners to play. Described by Segovia as "more saint than musician," Tarrega seems to have innovated primarily in pursuit of his artistic goals. Consisting of little more than his practice materials, the Tarrega "Method" offers only perfunctory rest stroke methodology.

No Sails Just Scales

For all its potential as an agent of "methods of diminishing," the "good ship rest stroke" remained largely *without sails* during the first half of the 20th century. (A lifeboat appeared, but rather than sails it brought tins – nourishing but tedious – all labeled: "Segovia Scales.")

It was left to the Aaron Shearer Methods to put rest stroke technique on a progressive basis, as well as to create distinct symbols for rest stroke and free stroke. (Aaron begins right hand technique in his second Method with the thumb, the only useful suggestion I made during our attempted collaboration, summer of '71 in his home town of Lewiston, Idaho.)

And so appeared, by fits and starts, a sensible approach to right hand development: thumb, rest stroke, free stroke.

Tool of the Trade

Like no guitarist before or since, Segovia's music inhabits *dramatic space*, his right hand technique empowering accents that – like Pavarotti high C's – long linger in the memory.

Such accents exemplify Segovia's unique rhetorical manner: well-polished technique that, like bowing and tonguing so adroitly employed by mainstream musicians, ensures competent playing even on a bad day.

To fully provision a rhetorical "kit bag" and to package it as progressive methodology for children – that is the principle aim of my Method, *The Musician-guitarist*.

Nails cum flesh Vs. Flesh Alone

Sonority achieved with *nails cum flesh* would seem essential to the modern view of guitar playing. But here, Peter and Nicky demonstrate an approach with a far longer pedigree, playing *without nails*.

I recommend this approach for:

1. All beginners, especially kids (who can not or will not, grow nails anyway.)
2. Anyone, who for any reason, is unable to grow and/or maintain nails.
3. Anyone who happens to agree with old Fuenllana: "only the tip, the living thing, can communicate the intention of the spirit," an injunction that still gives pause for thought.

a-m-i Rasgueo

The time is long since overdue to view rasgueo as fundamental percussive technique, divested of Flamenco associations. Sadly, even advanced classic guitarists still get caught in the bind of having little more than ill-defined scrapes on offer in their "hour of need," simply because they failed over time to develop rasgueo progressively. The sticking point is the impracticality of employing the little finger. Once concentrating on teaching a-m-i rasgueo, I started

to make headway. Pieces #57 and 58 represent the entry level and end stage of that process. This is a limited view of rasgueo, but by and large, one that satisfies repertoire criteria.

Within free stroke and rest stroke categories, tracks are generally faithful to the order of the Method. To economize, performance repeats are mostly deleted.

Special thanks and congratulations to Hunter, now a graduate of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, as well as to Roxana Waterson, Michael Sullivan, Elvin Johns, Bill Chubb, James Lo and my indefatigable wife, Sylvia Goh Luse, for their conceptual input, as well as clarifications of my murky prose.

Compositions and performances are by me unless otherwise credited. Nicky, Peter, Cheng Kit, Roxana, Tan Tan, Arthur, Soo Wah and Hunter are featured at the web site link – [Commentaries by student performers – GUITARS 'R LUSE!!!](#)

One of the happiest revelations of this long project was the eagerness with which each and every student unhesitatingly sought perfection in their results. Above all, my undying gratitude to Bruno Goh Luse, whose dedication and expertise has brought the tonalities of diverse instruments and playing styles into acoustical harmony. (Bruno has asked me to advise audiophiles that all recordings were done without compression.)

To learn about the Luse Method, log onto Info@Musicianguitarist.com.