A Graded Collection of Exceptional Solo Guitar Études and Preludes

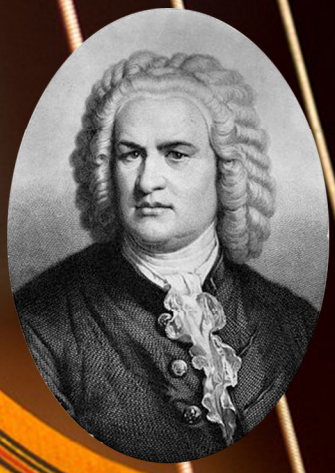
with a Homage to Raphael Rabello and His Rendition of Villa-Lobos' "Étude in E minor"

Agustín Barrios

Dionisio Aguado

Fernando Sor

Heitor Villa-Lobos



J.S. Bach

Mauro Giuliani

Eight Études and Preludes
Transcribed and Graded by Brian Hayes

A Graded Collection of Exceptional Solo Guitar Études and Preludes

with a Homage to Raphael Rabello and His Rendition of Villa-Lobos' *Étude in E minor*

Brian Hayes

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ETUDES AND PRELUDES

Études and preludes are often grouped together in recordings and publications such as this one. An étude (Spanish: *estudio*; Portuguese: *estudo*; French: *étude*, meaning "study") is typically written to develop a specific technical skill, while a prelude is often intended to establish a mood or serve as an introduction to a larger work.

Because études are designed as studies, they are sometimes overlooked as concert repertoire. Yet many composers have demonstrated that technical studies can also be compelling musical works. Even *Recuerdos de la Alhambra*—arguably one of the most beloved pieces in the classical guitar repertoire—was likely written by Francisco Tárrega as a study in second-string tremolo technique. Likewise, Frédéric Chopin elevated the étude to an art form by combining technical challenges with expressive and memorable music. A work's value, therefore, is not determined by whether it is labeled a study, nor by whether it has a descriptive title.

When students first encounter études, they are often focused primarily on mastering the technical demands of the music. As a player's abilities develop, greater attention can be given to musical elements such as rubato, dynamic contrast, phrasing, and tempo flexibility. To help communicate these expressive possibilities, performance markings have been included throughout many of the pieces in this collection.

Each arrangement is presented in both standard notation and standard notation with tablature. Fingerings and string designations have been carefully included throughout both versions. The pieces have also been graded and arranged in approximate order of increasing difficulty, although individual experiences may vary depending on each player's strengths and background.

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ABOUT THE TRANSCRIPTIONS

Étude No. 5 in B Minor (Op. 35 No. 22) by Fernando Sor (Level 3) is an excellent example of how a simple study can become a compelling musical work when performed with attention to phrasing, dynamics, and tone. Despite its modest technical demands, the piece offers students an opportunity to develop musical expression while building fundamental technique. All performance markings are included.

Prelude from Cello Suite No. 1, BWV 1007 by J.S. Bach (Level 5) is one of the most recognizable and frequently performed solo instrumental works ever written. Although originally composed for cello, it adapts exceptionally well to the guitar and has become a staple of the classical guitar repertoire. This arrangement encourages a flexible, expressive approach to tempo, allowing the performer to shape the musical line according to their own artistic interpretation.

Prelude in C Minor by Agustín Barrios (Level 7) is a short but highly expressive work that showcases Barrios's Romantic style and lyrical writing. The Level 7 rating reflects the piece's left-hand challenges as well as its demands for careful control of dynamics, phrasing, and rubato. All performance markings are included.

Prelude in G Minor (Op. 5 No. 1) by Agustín Barrios (Level 8) is a lyrical and expressive work featuring a continuous stream of sixteenth notes supported by a variety of bass accompaniment patterns. The piece requires careful attention to phrasing, slurs, and melodic continuity while maintaining balance between the melody and bass line. This edition includes complete performance markings and editorial fingerings informed in part by observations from John Williams' recorded performance of the work.

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Giuliani / Aguado Suite (Two Arpeggio Études in E Minor) (Level 9) combines two short études by Mauro Giuliani and Dionisio Aguado into a single concert piece. Although originally written as separate studies, their shared key and identical arpeggio pattern make them well suited to be performed as a continuous work. In this edition, each étude is repeated before culminating in an original ending added by the editor.

The Level 9 rating reflects the advanced right-hand technique required to perform the piece at full speed with clarity and control. Complete performance markings are included throughout.

Étude in B-flat Major (Op. 29 No. 13) by Fernando Sor is one of Sor's most technically demanding studies and was given a Level 10 rating due primarily to the challenges posed by the key of B-flat and the resulting left-hand requirements. This edition includes complete performance markings and several editorial fingering revisi**ons** intended to facilitate smoother chord transitions and movement across the fretboard.

Étude No. 1 in E Minor by Heitor Villa-Lobos (with Raphael Rabello Ending) (Level 10) is based on Raphael Rabello's celebrated live performance of the work. While the étude begins as Villa-Lobos originally composed it, Rabello's rendition gradually transforms into an extended improvisational showcase inspired by Brazilian guitar traditions.

This edition combines note-for-note transcriptions of many of Rabello's most memorable improvised passages with original *falsetas* (short melodic passages, either composed or improvised) composed by the editor. Additional sections provide chord symbols and scale suggestions, allowing performers to create their own improvised material. The result is both a tribute to Rabello's remarkable artistry and an invitation for guitarists to explore their own improvisational voice.

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RAPHAEL RABELLO

Raphael Rabello was born in Petrópolis, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on October 31, 1962, into a family of musicians. He began studying guitar at the age of seven under the guidance of his older brother. By age fourteen, he had switched to the Brazilian seven-string guitar, begun performing professionally, and launched what would become an extraordinary recording career.

In 1976, Rabello founded the group Os Carioquinhas, recording two albums with the ensemble in 1976 and 1977. His most productive years followed between 1982 and 1995, during which time he was widely regarded as one of the greatest guitarists of his generation. His first solo album, Raphael 7 Cordas, was released in 1982. Throughout his career, Rabello recorded sixteen albums, appeared on more than six hundred additional recordings, and performed alongside many celebrated musicians, including Paco de Lucía.

Rabello's reputation extended far beyond Brazil. He performed throughout Europe, North America, and South America, captivating audiences with his remarkable technique, expressive musicianship, and seemingly effortless improvisational ability. Also an admirer of Agustín Barrios, Rabello recorded memorable performances of Barrios' works that remain available to listeners today.

Rabello's life was cut tragically short when he died on April 27, 1995, at the age of thirty-two. Despite his brief career, his influence on Brazilian guitar continues to be felt, and many musicians regard him as one of the finest guitarists ever to emerge from Brazil.

Rabello's rendition of Villa-Lobos' Estudo No. 1 was recorded at Teatro Franco Zampari in São Paulo, Brazil, for the television program Ensaio da TV Cultura in 1993 and is currently available to the public on YouTube. While the performance begins with Villa-Lobos' original étude, Rabello gradually transforms the work into an extended improvisational showcase accompanied by Latin percussion instruments, including the Brazilian cuíca. The result is a fascinating fusion of Villa-Lobos' concert repertoire and the improvisational traditions of Brazilian music.

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Rather than transcribing every note of Rabello's improvisation, this edition focuses on preserving many of his most memorable ideas while also encouraging the performer to participate in the creative process. Certain passages are presented as note-for-note transcriptions, while others contain original material composed by the editor or are left open for the performer to create their own ideas. Suggested chord symbols and scale choices are provided throughout these sections as a starting point for improvisation. The goal is not only to celebrate Rabello's remarkable performance, but also to invite the guitarist to engage with the same spirit of creativity and exploration that made his playing so distinctive.

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Cello Suite No.1 (BWV 1007)

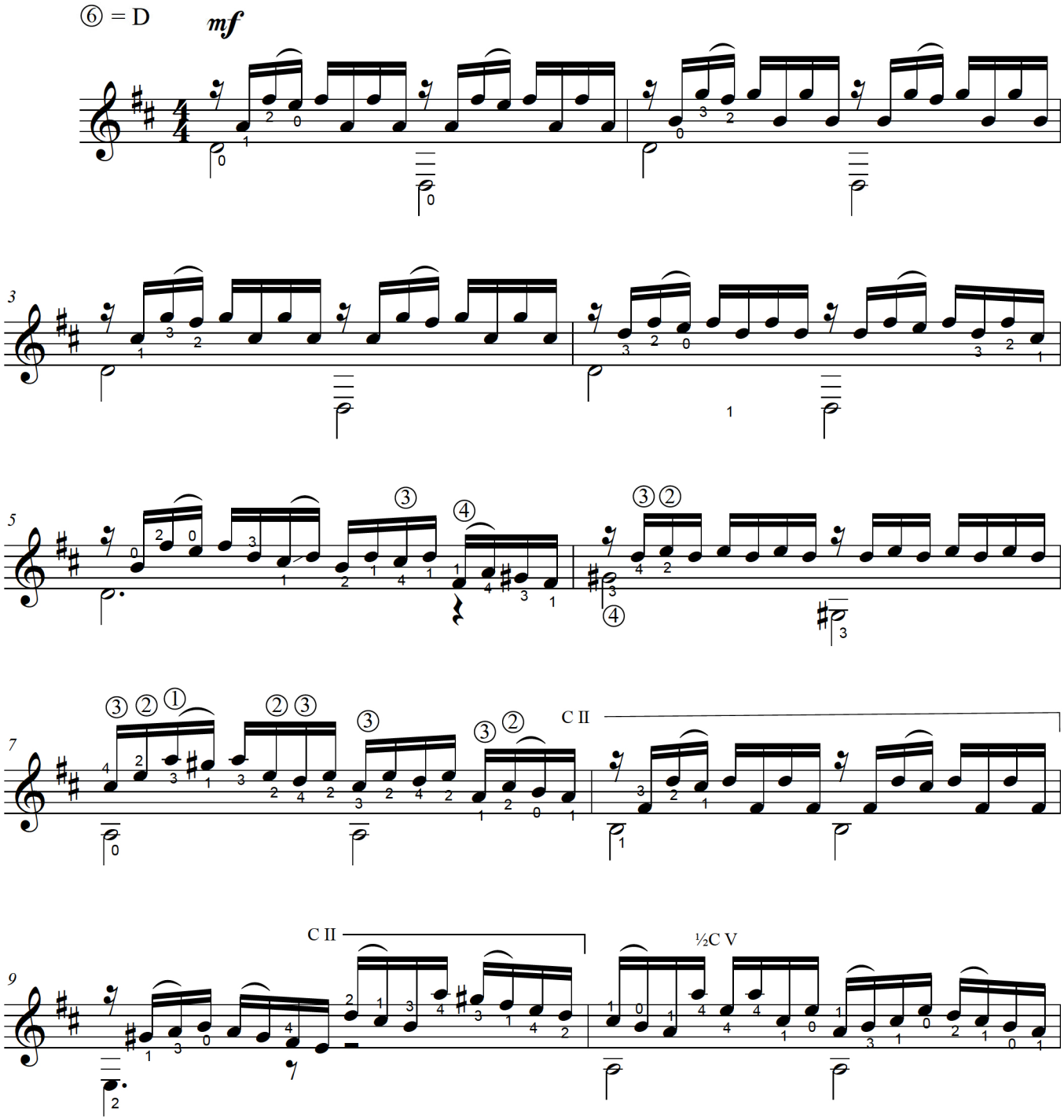
Prelude

Transcribed and Fingered by Brian Hayes

J.S. Bach

Sample Page - Standard Notation

Tempo rubato throughout



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Cello Suite No.1 (BWV 1007)

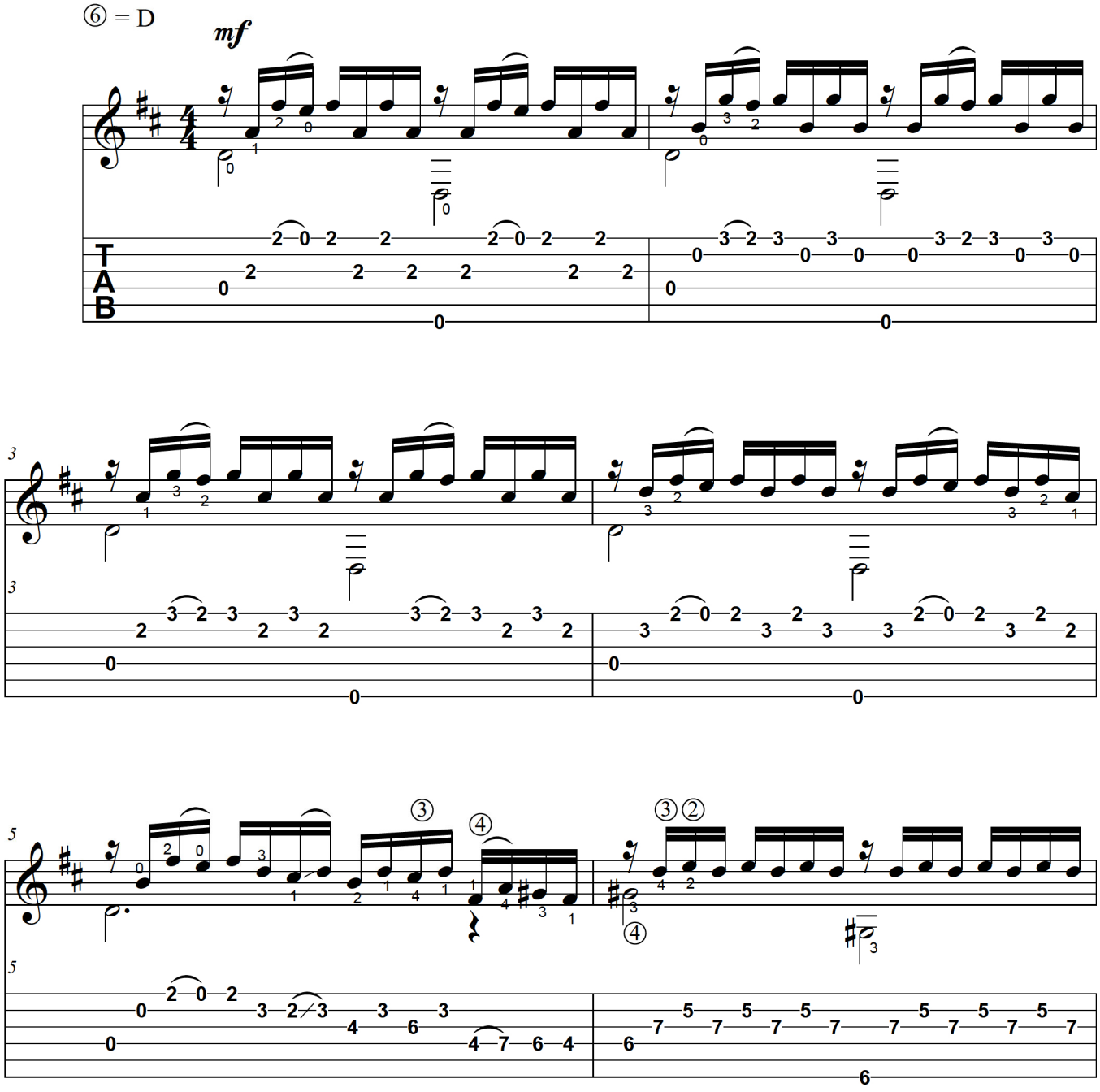
Prelude

Transcribed and Fingered by Brian Hayes

J.S. Bach

Same Passage - Tablature Version Also Included

Tempo rubato throughout



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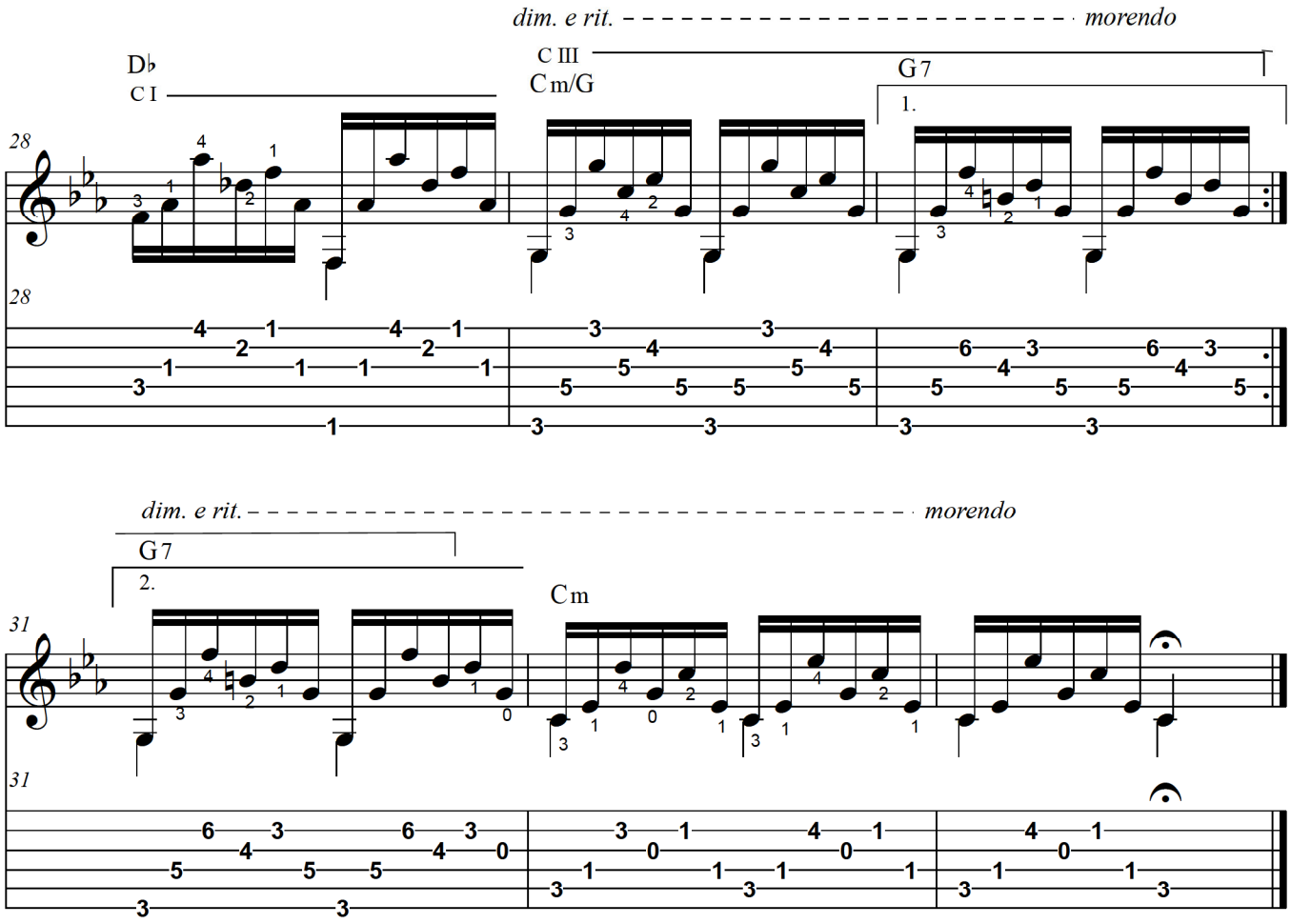
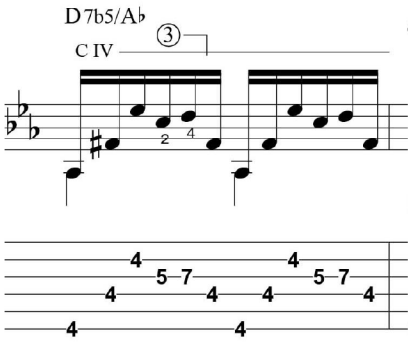


A

' T ' is indicated for use of the left-hand thumb for bass note 'Ab." Although using the thumb in this way is uncommon in classical guitar, it is sometimes done and in this circumstance and for this arrangement, it was chosen for being the smoothest sound, possible. Use of the thumb was not Barrios' choice for this passage. Fig 1 (*right*) shows my second choice which is still both easier to execute and smoother than Barrios' fingerings. John Williams, in his arrangement, decided to lower the F# to an 'F,' changing the chord to a 'Dm7b5,' and also chose to delete measure 8, altogether.

Fig 1

(measure 7, alternate fingerings)



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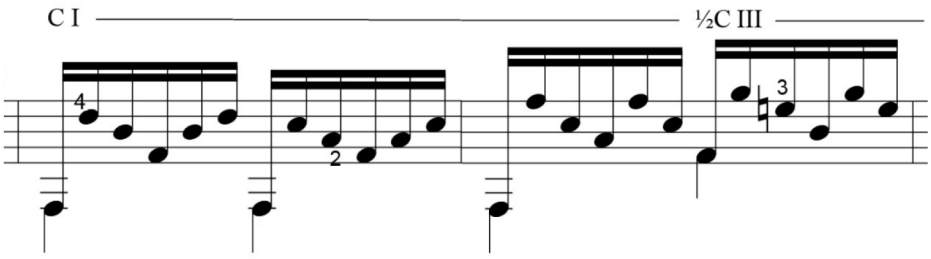
Editorial Notes

The fingering revisions in this edition are made relative to the fingerings found in *Twenty Studies of Fernando Sor* by Andrés Segovia, which has become one of the most widely used editions of these studies. The Tecla edition, edited from original sources and seeking to restore Sor's original fingerings and editorial markings, was not consulted when making the fingering decisions in this publication. Fingering changes have been made in measures 6, 7, 10, 11, 28, 42–44, 47–48, and 56–58.

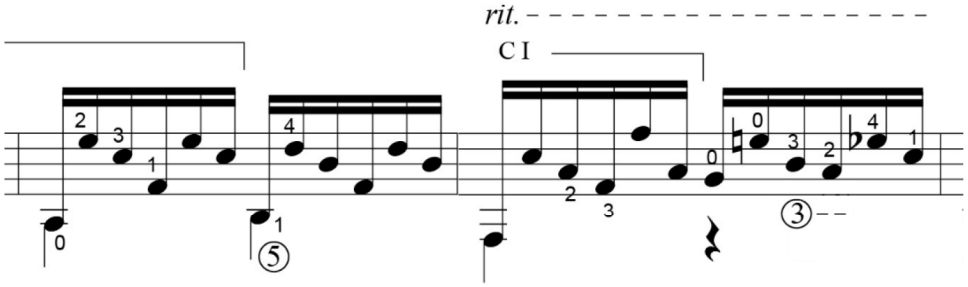
A

In order to provide occasional relief from constant barring, several F-major chord fingerings have been changed to non-barre alternatives. The original Segovia fingerings are included as optional suggestions. In addition, the second beat of measure 28 has been handled differently from the Segovia edition.

Measures 24 and 25 (from Segovia's *Twenty Studies of Fernando Sor*)



Measures 27 and 28 (from Segovia's *Twenty Studies of Fernando Sor*)



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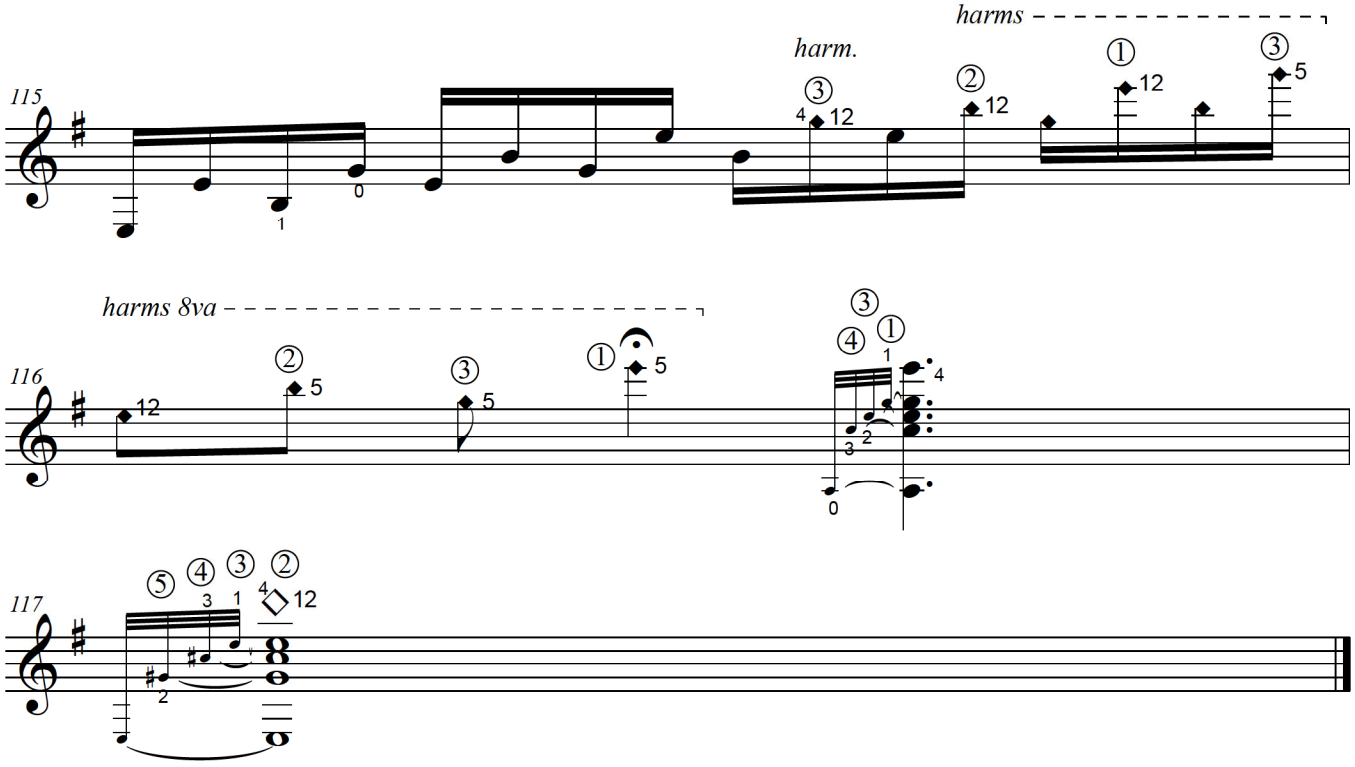
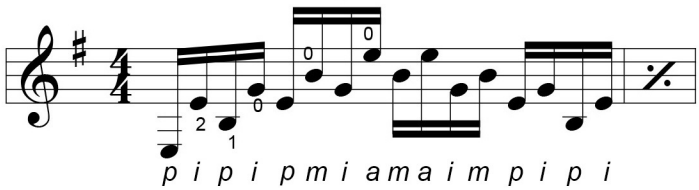


A

Villa-Lobos's Étude No. 1 has inspired considerable discussion regarding right-hand fingering. Several solutions have been proposed by performers and editors, each emphasizing different technical priorities. Whichever right-hand fingerings we wind up choosing to perform this piece, it might be reasonable to want to determine what Villa-Lobos, himself, originally intended. Both the 1928 manuscript (the oldest manuscript of the score, available) and the 1953 Max Eschig publication show the right-hand fingerings as follows:

1928 manuscript and the 1953 Max Eschig publication:



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B

The chord progression found in measures 77–98 is identical to the one found in measures 23–44 and is built over a series of fully diminished chords descending by half step. Measures 77–80 feature Raphael Rabello's improvisational choices, while measures 81–88 feature falsetas composed by the editor. (The term *falseta* is used here as part of the flamenco tradition and likely reflects the terminology Rabello himself would have used.) These measures also include the corresponding chord symbols and scales used in the falsetas' creation. Measures 89–96 provide the same chord symbols and scale suggestions, but with the measures left blank, allowing the performer to improvise freely or prepare their own falsetas in advance.

The scale suggestions represent my personal approach to navigating the progression and should be viewed as possibilities rather than requirements. Although these chords can be analyzed in several ways, I found it useful to think of them primarily as chord-scale relationships, allowing both the target tones and scale choices to move together as the harmony descends.

The first chord in the sequence may be viewed as a fully diminished chord built on G♯. However, because the open sixth-string E remains as a pedal tone throughout the passage, it can also be interpreted as an E7(♭9) sonority. For this reason, the E Phrygian Dominant scale is suggested over the opening measure.

As the progression continues downward by half step, the next harmony becomes an E fully diminished chord. Fully diminished chords are commonly associated with either the whole-half diminished scale or the half-whole diminished scale. Since both scales contain the same chord tones, either approach may be used. For the purposes of this edition, the whole-half diminished scale was chosen.

Initially, I considered maintaining the same diminished scale over the following harmony, since the E whole-half diminished scale can be used to outline both the E fully diminished chord and the D♯ fully diminished chord that follows. I ultimately found it more intuitive to allow the scale choices to descend along with the chords. During the preparation of this edition, I found that this descending approach felt more natural on the guitar, allowing the harmonic targets, scale choices, and fretboard patterns to move together by half step throughout the progression.

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Raphael Rabello
(October 31, 1962 – April 27, 1995)

- Étude in B Minor (Op. 35 No. 22) by Fernando Sor (Level 3)
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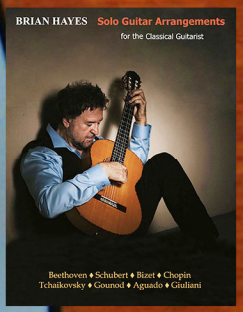

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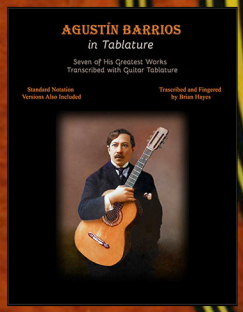
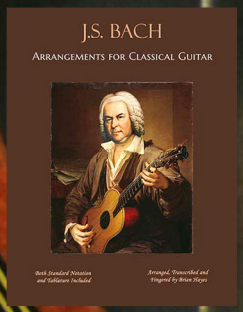


Agustin Barrios
in Tablature



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