

REPERTOIRE STUDY GUIDES

CLASSICAL GUITAR CORNER ACADEMY



STUDY GUIDE

LÁGRIMA

BY FRANCISCO TÁRREGA

GRADE 6

BY DR. SIMON POWIS
CLASSICAL GUITAR CORNER ACADEMY
WWW.CLASSICALGUITARCORNER.COM



Introduction

About the Study Guides

The joy of learning is fostered by clear goals, a structured path, and a freedom to focus. Together these elements provide a feeling of achievement and in turn, the joy of learning. It can be difficult for the student to create individual study elements on their own and that is why I have developed this series of study guides.

By addressing a piece of repertoire in a wholistic approach you will develop a solid understanding of the piece from the outset. Even if some concepts take a long time to master you will benefit from having started the piece on the right path from the beginning and feel confident about how you are investing your time.

Each study guide works on theory, analysis, musicianship, and technique along with practice suggestions and investigations into unique aspects for each piece. Studying in this structured manner will not only guide you but it will also help you develop an approach to learning repertoire in general.

Have Fun

Simon Powis



CLASSICAL GUITAR CORNER
ACADEMY

About the Academy

The Academy at Classical Guitar Corner has become much more than an online resource to learn classical guitar. It has become a community, a sanctuary for learning, a source of inspiration, and a family.

With a structured approach to learning, students at the Academy benefit from a clear path to progress. That path guides them through the maze of materials that make up the learning process and leaves them feeling positive about music. The feeling of achievement, of success, and of mutual respect fuels further dedicated practice and a virtuous cycle ensues.

If you find that these materials suit your learning style and help you focus in your practice sessions, then I highly encourage you to join the CGC Academy as it is a world class institution filled with people who are passionate about the classical guitar.

www.classicalguitarcorner.com

About Simon Powis

A passionate and expressive style coupled with a formidable technique has gained attention for Simon Powis as a talented soloist, chamber musician and innovator. Growing up in Sydney, Australia, Powis began his studies at the age of five on the cornet. Inspired by his brother's musical pursuits he took up the guitar at age eleven and began an enduring obsession that would result in performances throughout Europe, Australia, Asia, and the Americas.

After completing his studies at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music with Raffaele Agostino in 2004, Powis traveled extensively throughout Europe to study with some of the world's most renowned virtuosos. Oscar Ghiglia, David Russell, Pavel Steidl and Aniello Desiderio have had a great impact on the musical style and technical foundation that Powis possesses. From 2006 to 2010 he attended Yale University on full scholarship, and under the mentorship of Benjamin Verderey he was awarded the first doctorate for a classical guitarist in over thirty years.

As a teacher Powis has instructed masterclasses in Lima, Mexico City and New York and at Yale he was employed as both a guitar instructor at the school of music and a teaching fellow in the department of music. With a growing interest in pedagogy he decided to undertake research in sight reading for his doctoral thesis. Insights and encouragement from Jerry Willard, David Leisner, John Williams and Ben Verderey have helped develop sight reading seminars that Powis has given in music schools, guitar societies and guitar festivals around the world.

Publications by Simon Powis

Graded Repertoire for Classical Guitar
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Lágrima

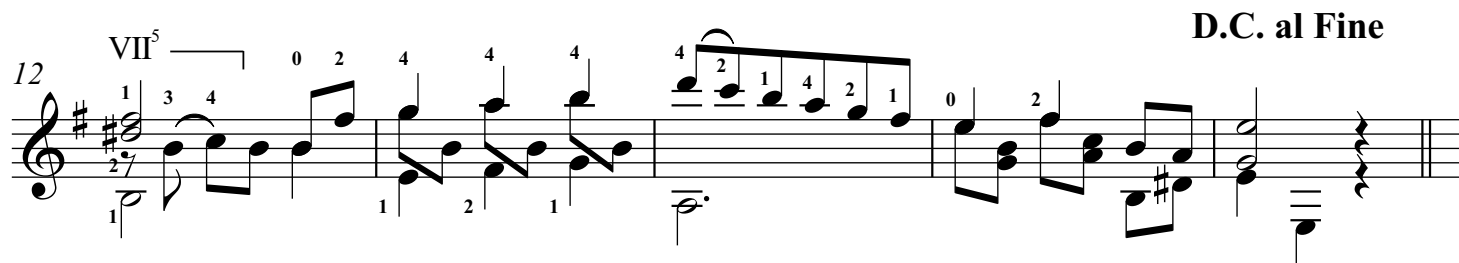
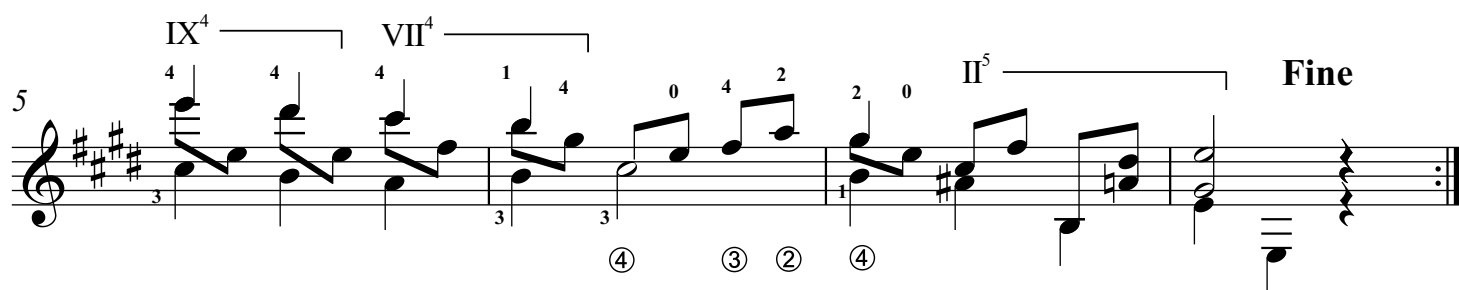
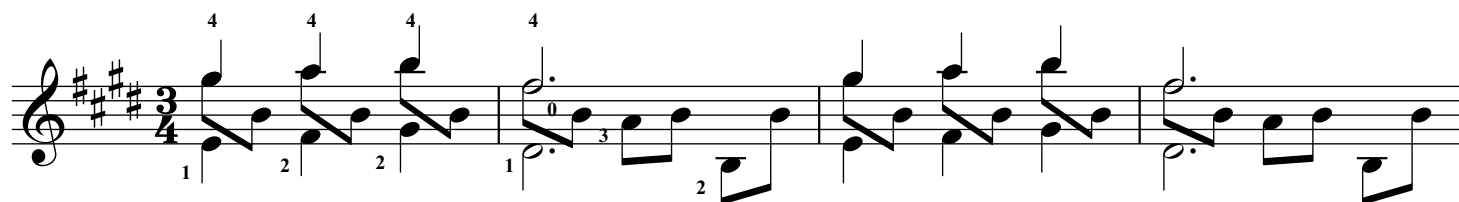
preludio

Francisco Tárrega (1852-1909)

Edition by Simon Powis

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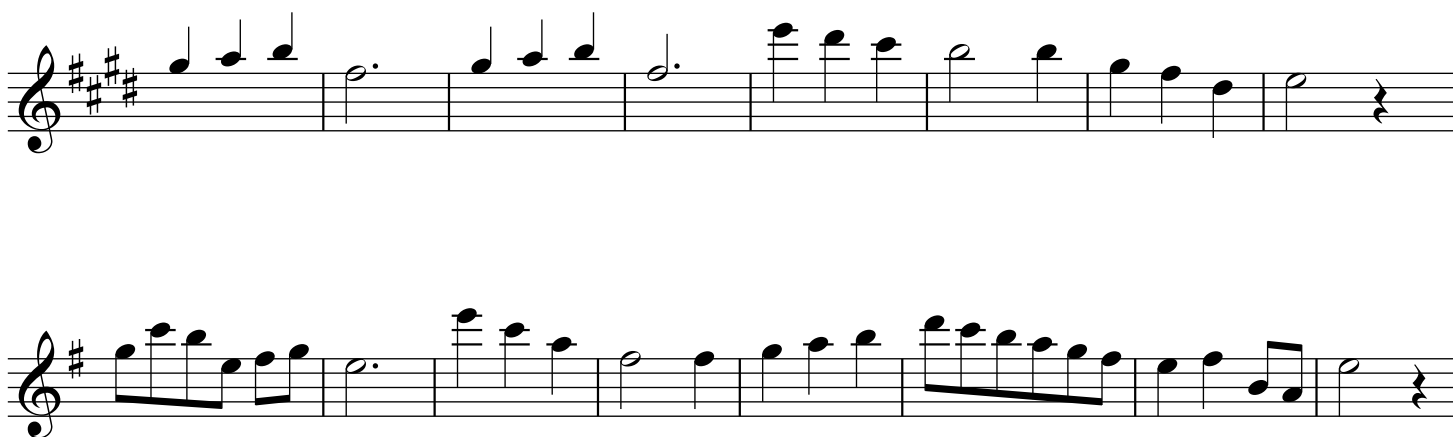
Andante



The Melody

The following melody is a slightly simplified version of the melody in Lágrima. It is a great idea to play through the melody of all the pieces you study as it will help to hear the full musical line throughout the piece. Sometimes, with all of the other notes flying around, the simplest of melodies can get lost in the fray. Play this through several times, not worrying about fingering, until you have a clear concept of the melody.

One particular interesting measure is number 15, the penultimate measure. If you look at the score it seems like the B and A eighth notes are part of the melody, but in fact they lead down to a G and are part of an inner voice. Knowing this should affect the way you play that measure...



The Bass

The bass line is important in this piece too, and playing it through on its own will help you notice when you might not be sustaining a note for its full duration. A good composer, such as Tárrega, will write a bass line that is complete in itself, almost like a second melody. Try out your singing chops and sing both the melody and bass lines. If the chimes in... you're doing a good job.



I hear voices! (not all notes are created equal)

The most common musical hurdle intermediate players face is the separation of voices on the guitar. Our music asks that we cram three, sometimes four individual voices into our hands and make them sound like a string trio is playing with three separate instruments. It is one of the hardest techniques to master but it is the one that makes our instrument so enchanting.

Lágrima has three voices: a melody in the upper voice, a well defined bass voice and a middle voice that provides harmonic support (and in m. 18 a small connecting passage in thirds). What I hear, almost without fail, is that the student will play all of these voices at the same level without any differentiation. What really needs to happen is that each voice holds a position in a hierarchy. The melody is the most important, then the bass, then the accompanying inner voice can be very subtle and soft. If that middle voice is too loud, the beautiful melody that makes this piece so special is lost. I have marked those danger notes in the inner voice with ORANGE. Keep them *soft* and in a *supporting role* only.

So that is the first cautionary tale; the second is about your open strings.

Much of this piece sounds lush and rich because it is played in the upper positions and sometimes the melody is on the second or third string. If you go from the rich sounding notes and suddenly play an open string, there is a big danger of making a harsh sound that doesn't match. These notes have been marked in RED. I want you to *take care of these notes*, and make them *match in tone color* to the notes around them.

The musical score is written for guitar in G major (one sharp). It consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. It contains several measures with fingerings (1, 2, 4) and orange dots marking specific notes. The second staff continues the melody and includes a 'Fine' marking. The third staff features a repeat sign and more complex fingering. The fourth staff concludes the piece with a 'D.C. al Fine' instruction. Throughout the score, orange dots are placed on notes in the inner voice to indicate they should be played softly, and red dots are placed on notes near open strings to indicate they should match the tone color of the surrounding notes.

Harmony

By understanding the harmonic construction of any given piece you will get a clearer grasp of form, phrasing, and it will aid with memorization. Take note of the chord names written above the staff and also the relationships that the chords have in each key. These relationships are marked with Roman numerals below the staff.

The two pillars of harmony in western classical music are I and V, tonic and dominant. Listen to how these two harmonies pull and push the music along to the end of each phrase. Listen while you are playing and also put the guitar down and read the harmonies as you listen to a recording.

E Major: I (V₄⁶ I⁶) V I (V₄⁶ I⁶) V

vi ii⁶ I₄⁶ ii₃⁴ I₄⁶ (V₆/V) V⁷ I

E minor: i V i ii^o V

i iv i⁶ ii^o V i

Let's get Technical.

Guide Fingers

The first five measures use the fourth finger for the upper melody, and you can keep that finger down for the entire time. As the notes are on the first string, we will not have any squeaks from the shifting, but we will need to look out for unwanted glissando effects.

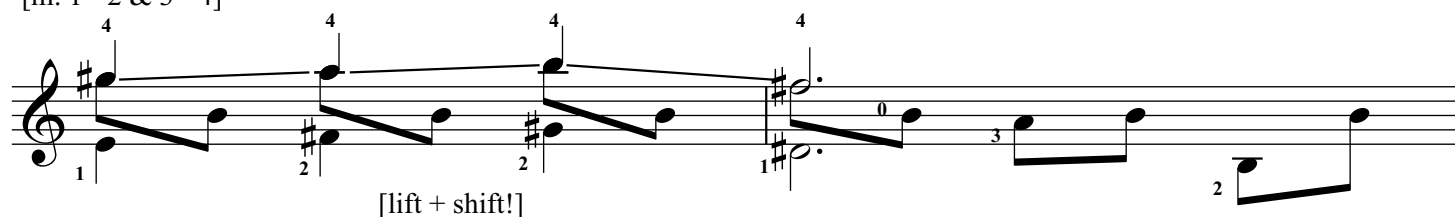
Using the fourth finger as a guide finger will help balance the hand in the first measure and give accuracy to the shift in the second measure (back to the F#). Looking at the lower voice, we can see that

there is an option to use the second finger as a guide finger on the fourth string.

Try this yourself and you will find that it is quite difficult not to make a string squeak. I think the best solution for this passage is to lift the second string in the first measure as it shifts and keep the fourth finger down on the melody.

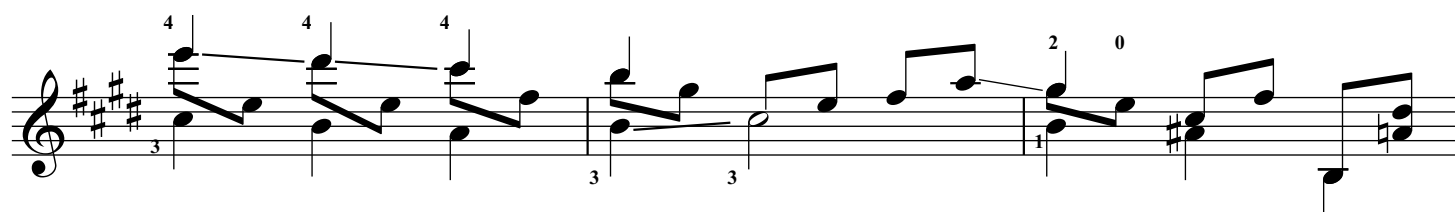
You will also find useful guide fingers in measures 5, 6, 13, and 14 as shown below:

[m. 1 - 2 & 3 - 4]

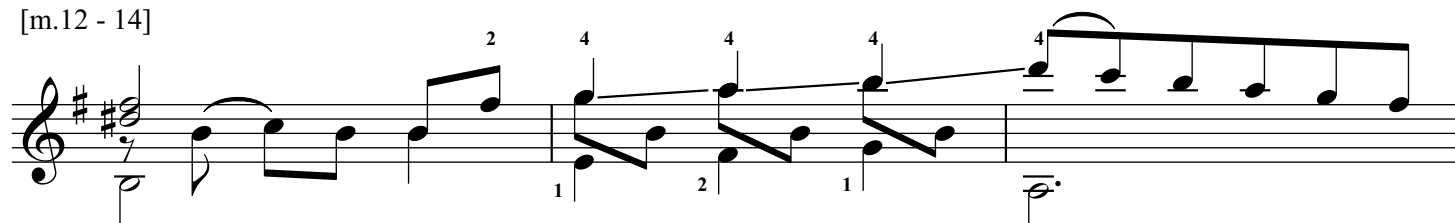


[m. 5 - 7]

CIX

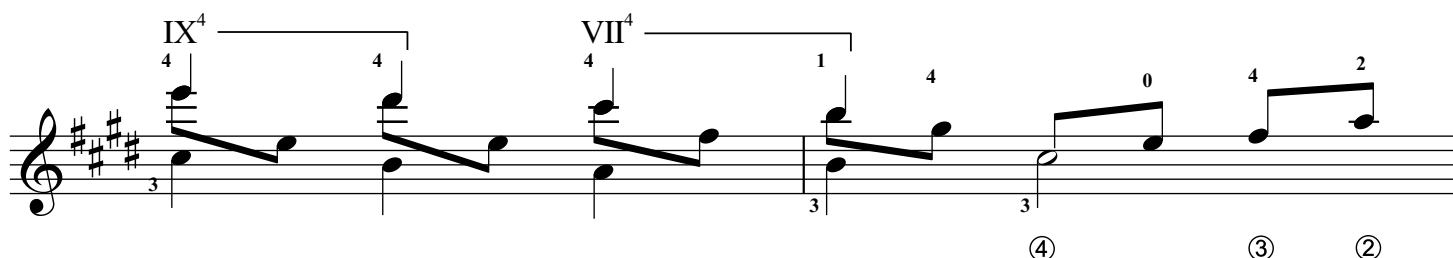


[m.12 - 14]

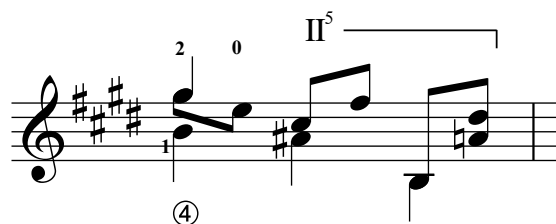


Barres

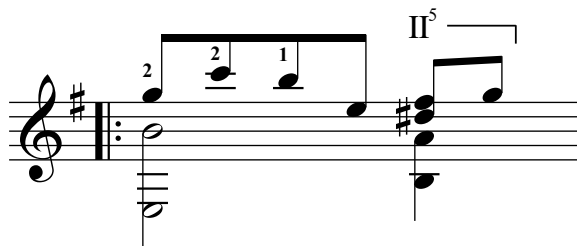
The first appearance of barre technique is perhaps the most challenging in this piece. The gentle descending line in measure 5 needs to be played legato and you need to make it sound easy. Keep the third finger raised up on the fingertip so that the notes on the third string are clear, and make sure you have your index knuckle raised to create a straight-finger barre across the fingerboard. Also, be sure that the barre is snug against the fret, and that you are not holding down any more strings than you need. In measure 5 you only need to be placing the barre on four strings.



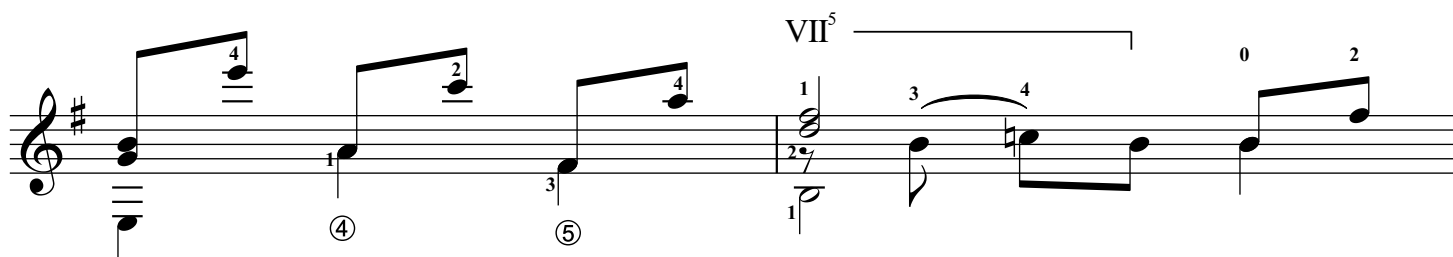
In the second beat of measure 7 prepare the barre across five strings, as you are going to use it in the following beat. The open 1st string in the second eighth note will give your left hand time to move smoothly into position.



Measure 9 also has the opportunity to prepare the barre after an open string has been played.



The last barre in the piece can be played very smoothly as fingers 1 and 2 are both free in the previous beat. Start getting the 1st finger into position while playing the F#.



Left-Hand Preparation

Left-hand preparation can greatly enhance the legato nature of any piece, and playing legato is the constant challenge of any guitarist. Our instrument just doesn't naturally do it for us.

All of the places marked in funky purple indicate an opportunity to prepare the left-hand finger or position prior to actually playing the note. You don't have to hold the note down, but have the finger hovering where it needs to play next, or at least moving in the direction of where it needs to be.

My favorite passage for preparation here is measure 11- its quite a fun series of stretches!

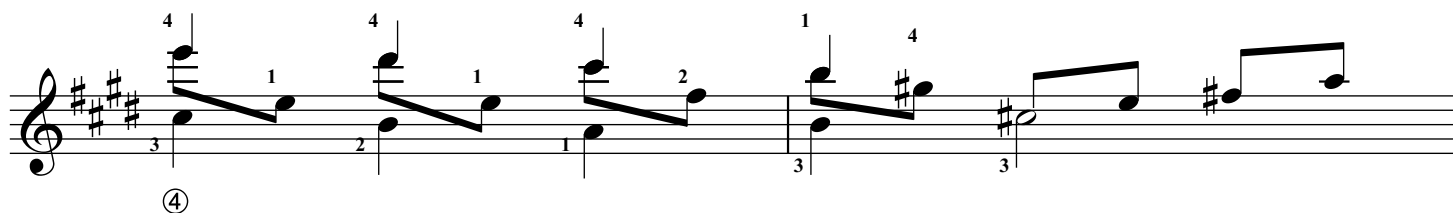
L'Allegretto
 Franz Schubert, Op. 137, in G major

The score is written for a single melodic line on a treble clef staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 2/4. The piece consists of four systems of music. The first system shows the beginning of the piece. The second system includes fingering numbers (1-4) and a 'Fine' marking. The third system includes fingering numbers and a 'D.C. al Fine' marking. The fourth system shows the final measures of the piece, ending with a double bar line and repeat dots.

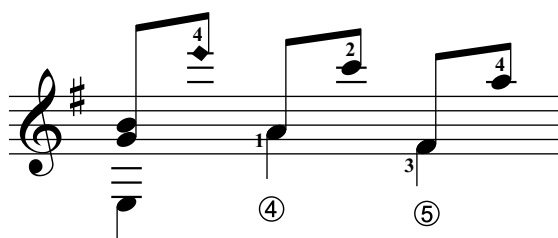
Alternate fingerings

Not a fan of the barre? Well, there are usually alternatives to using a barre, and they can yield very musical results. In measures 5 and 6 we can get away without using any barre at all. Rather, you can use a pivot finger on the 3rd string and bunch up 2 and 1 while still using 4 as a guide finger.

Have a try to see if it works for you.



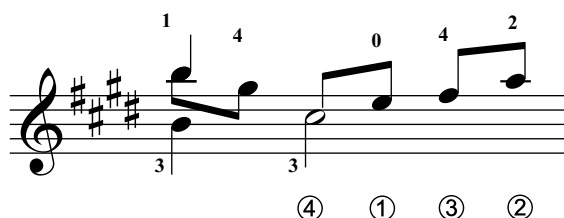
A little detail that I like to change (and this is simply my own idea) is to play a harmonic in measure 11 for the high E. It saves the stretch to the following A on the fourth string and also adds some interest. Perhaps you could add it on the repeat?



Campanella fingering

Measure 6 creates a great opportunity to use campanella fingering. Campanella fingering creates a 'bell-like' effect by playing a single melodic line while using a different string for each successive note. By using the different strings the notes will ring over each other, more so than if they were played on a single string.

It is a musical choice to use campanella fingering and may not always be the best option. It can also be played with the campanella effect down in the fourth position.

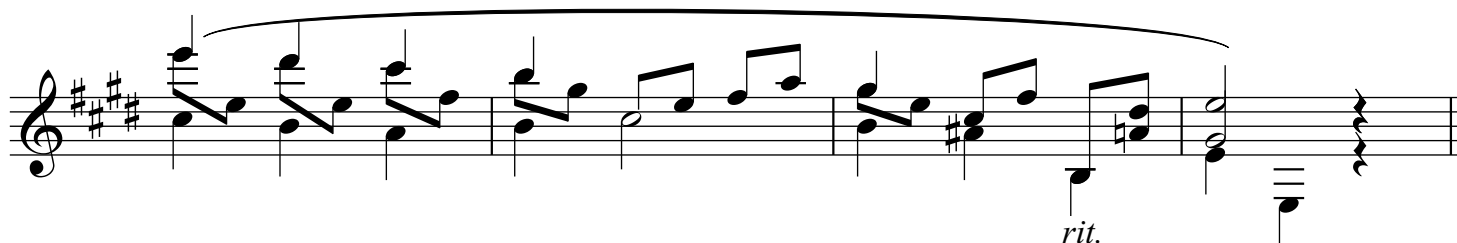


Phrasing and Expression

In the first four measures we have a great opportunity to use an 'echo' effect. Play measures 3 and 4 *piano* or even *pianissimo* and you can also experiment with changing your tone.



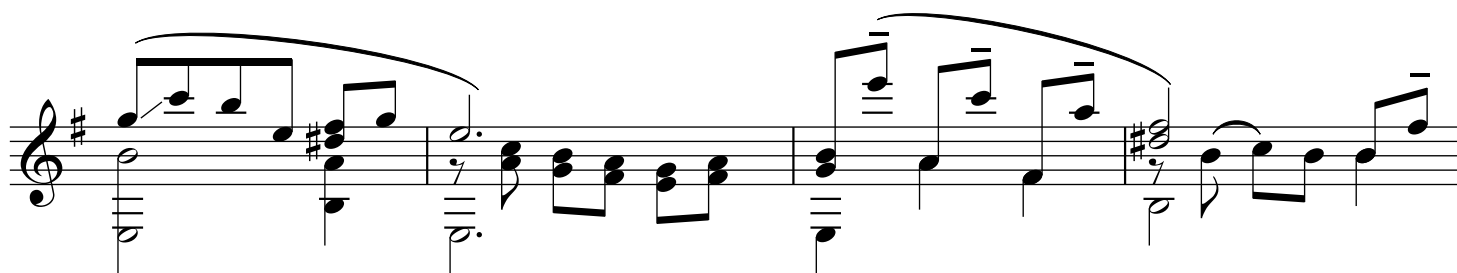
Keep this phrase long and don't break it up by disturbing the rhythm. If you want to use a little *ritenuto* use it on the last beat of measure 7.



The minor section has some great opportunities to be expressive. Right off the bat we can use a *glissando* between G and C. Careful, however, not to make this too pronounced. The gliss should be light and elegant, with a slight *crescendo* towards the C.

Once you get to the thirds, try and differentiate their sound so that it's clear they are a separate voice.

In measure 11 bring out the off-beat high notes to give some rhythmic interest to the phrase.



Measures 13 to 16 can be quite gentle and beautiful, with the minor iteration of the opening melody. When it climbs up to that high D, you can take your time and give it your sweetest tone. Add in a nice *ritenuto* towards the end of the phrase.

