

# CAVATINA, Play It Like a Pro™

## Background and Notes on Interpretation

### About the Published Music

Due to copyright law, the complete score to *Cavatina* is not included in the Play It Like a Pro™ package. You must purchase it separately.

Before beginning, number the measures in your purchased copy of the music. Some editions have a two-measure intro. Most don't. If you have an edition that looks like any of those below with the intro, do NOT number those first two measures. You will be out-of-sync with all the Play It Like a Pro™ videos and musical examples. Instead, *number the third measure as measure #1*:

Example A:

Number this measure  
as measure #1

1 2

6-4-5-4-6 6-4-5-4-6 6-4-5-4-6 6-4-5-4-6

7-6-4-6 6-8-9-8-6 6-6-8-9-8-6

Example B:

Number this measure  
as measure #1

1 2

6-4-5-4-6 6-4-5-4-6 6-4-5-4-6 6-4-5-4-6

6-6-8-9-8-6 6-6-8-9-8-6

Number this measure  
as measure #1

Example C:

1 2

T A B

6 4 5 4 6 6 4 5 7 6 4 5 4 6 7 6 8 8 6

0 0 6 6 8 6 11 11 9 9 11 11 9 9 11

The correct meter for the piece is 3/4. Some editions are wrongly printed as 6/8 as in Example C above. Be sure to play it in 3/4 time, with slight accents on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> beats in each measure:

1 VI IX

T A B

7 7 10-12 9 9 10 9 10 9 11 11 9 10 9 11

6 4 5 4 6 6 8 8 6 11 9 11 9 11 9 10 9 11

NOT:

1 VI IX

T A B

7 7 10-12 9 9 10 9 10 9 11 11 9 10 9 11

6 4 5 4 6 6 8 8 6 11 9 11 9 11 9 10 9 11

### History of Cavatina

Cavatina was originally written for solo piano. Guitarist John Williams asked composer Stanley Myers to re-write it for the guitar and to expand the piece. Williams recorded it in 1970 on his LP entitled *Changes* in Stanley Myers' arrangement for two guitars and orchestra. Williams played both guitar parts, overdubbing them on the album. Guitar I was the melody only and Guitar II the chordal arpeggiated accompaniment.

The piece was used in the 1970 movie, *The Walking Stick* (Williams was not the guitarist). The piece achieved international fame when it was used as the theme for the 1978 movie, *The Deer Hunter*. For this soundtrack, John Williams played the first guitar part (the melody) and the second guitar part (accompaniment) was played (with a pick!) by well-known Hollywood session guitarist, Tommy Tedesco. Later, Williams re-recorded it (overdubbing both parts himself) for his movie theme album at a faster tempo. Williams' solo guitar arrangement of the piece was published in 1971.

## Tempo

1. On the album *Changes*, the tempo is MM=82
2. Movie score with intro MM=84
3. Fast tempo recording MM=94-97
4. 1971 sheet music tempo is listed as MM=80 but for a dotted half note which is obviously an error. It should be 80 for a quarter note.
5. In a book of pieces titled *Classical Pop* the music is wrongly notated in 6/8 time. Tempo is marked at 56 for a dotted quarter-note (which equates to 84 for a quarter note).
6. On his live concert performance, tempo ranges from 84-97.

It can be argued that without the orchestra to tie things together, a slightly faster tempo is beneficial when playing the piece as a solo.

## Introduction

Some of you may have a score with two introductory measures consisting of an E major arpeggio (see Examples A and B above). You can play them or not. I prefer the version with no introduction which is what I use in this Play it Like a Pro™.

Some sections of the movie score begin with G#-A melody pickup notes (see Example B above).

If you play the introductory measures as in Example A above, pre-plant all four left-hand fingers on the entire E-major chord before beginning. Otherwise, you might misplace the 4<sup>th</sup> finger which is supposed to land on the 5<sup>th</sup> string on the downbeat of the second measure. On the last G# of the second measure, lift the 4<sup>th</sup> finger as a helicopter lift (straight up so no release noise is produced) and move the finger quickly to the first-string B to begin the melody on the downbeat of the next measure.

Be sure to play both measures quietly. The notes in these measures are part of the accompaniment.

## The Melody

On his recordings with orchestra where the guitar parts were overdubbed, John Williams used rest stroke on almost every melody note. He also used a lot of rest stroke on his solo version. I prefer using as much rest stroke as possible to set the melody apart from the accompaniment, to get the best tone possible, and to increase the dynamic range. For example, rest stroke is invaluable for making a strong crescendo from m25-30. Rest stroke also works well if you decide to crescendo from m15-17.

The problem is that rest stroke can be difficult to execute simultaneously as the thumb plays free stroke as is called for in *Cavatina*. If you find rest stroke difficult, you might try working with the exercises I provide to learn to play simultaneously with the fingers rest stroke and the thumb free stroke.

If it just doesn't work for you, the piece can certainly be played all free stroke.

### [The Accompaniment](#)

The accompaniment should be played quietly in the background, all free stroke. A variety of right-hand patterns can be used as indicated in the annotated score.

### [How to Practice](#)

The annotated score and videos in Play It Like a Pro™ contain an overwhelming amount of information and detail. Pace yourself! During each practice session, focus on one topic or one or two measures at a time. When watching the videos, hit the pause and replay buttons frequently. Many of the videos are crucial to understanding how particular measures are played. Others illustrate what is already notated in the annotated score.

The hallmark of the Play It Like a Pro™ series is that I examine every detail and layer upon layer of possibilities and choices in regards to technique, fingerings, harmonizations, and interpretation. This is the way the very best players—the artist, the master, the professional—approach a piece of music. They seek out all the possibilities so they can discover what works best for them to bring the piece to life. So again, do not try to learn or absorb too many techniques or measures in one practice session or you will soon be overwhelmed.