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# Author's Preface

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Welcome! This is my little book about guitar technique. I want to make it clear from the start that the material in this book is meant to reflect my own way of doing things on the instrument. The exercises are those that have helped me, some of which I still practice every day.

The goal of *Pumping Nylon* is to offer ideas that will help solve various technical problems. The idea was to steer clear of assembling anything that resembled a method book. Rather, my intent was to focus only on specific technical issues which I felt had not been clearly explained elsewhere. Generally, the issues dealt with in this book are those that have been brought up time and time again by students in master classes and lessons over the past ten years or so.

The exercises and musical examples have been chosen because of their unique technical challenges. For instance, the Bach *Double* was taken from a solo guitar arrangement, stripped of all its bass notes and more comfortable fingerings, and transformed into a very effective string-crossing and scale study.

I don't pretend to have addressed every issue. (There are too many out there for one book!) The reader, however, is strongly encouraged to invent his/her own exercises whenever necessary, since all of our technical needs are so very different.

I hope you find a few answers to some of your questions. Go get 'em!

## *I would like to thank ...*

Nat Gunod, for coaching me through this process for the last two years; Brian Head and Andy York for composing their wonderful "made-to-order" etudes; Billy Arcila for posing for the photos that were used to create the illustrations; Durmel DeLeon for the photography; John Dearman and Matt Greif for their technical assistance; an endless list of friends for their constant encouragement; and the students at the National Guitar Summer Workshop, San Francisco Conservatory and the University of Southern California for being (not always voluntary) "guinea pigs" for much of the material contained herein. And special thanks to Ron Krown at Alfred Publishing for encouraging us to do this new edition.

## Glossary of Signs

This list will help you to interpret the various markings in the music.

- 1, 2, 3, 4.....Left hand fingers, numbered from index (1) to pinky (4).
- p, i, m, a*, .....Right hand fingers: *p* = thumb, *i* = index, *m* = middle, *a* = ring finger.
- ①②③④⑤⑥ .....The six strings of the guitar, numbered from low E① to high E⑥.
- IV, V, VII etc.....Roman numerals. Here is a quick review of these symbols: I=1, II=2, III=3, IV=4, V=5, VI=6, VII=7, VIII=8, IX=9, X=10, XI=11 and XII=12.
- BII<sub>4</sub> .....The B indicates a barre. The Roman numeral indicates the fret to be barred, and the small subscript arabic numeral indicates the number of strings to be barred. So, this symbol would indicate to barre four strings at the second fret.
- 1, -2, -3, -4 .....A dash in front of a fingering indicates a *guide finger shift*. A *shift* is a movement from one position to another. A *guide finger* is a finger that can be used just before and just after a shift. For instance, if the 4th finger has been used to play G on the 1st string, 3rd fret, and then moves to play A on the 1st string, 5th fret, it will be marked -4.

# Editor's Preface

I hope you will enjoy this new edition of Scott's gratifyingly popular book. As a response to public demand, we are happy to provide a version of the book that includes tablature. Hopefully, this will make the book useful to more guitarists. After all, everyone who plays the guitar has something to gain from learning some classical guitar technique, and something to learn from a great teacher.

This book evolved from a warm-up routine and technical regimen that Scott Tennant began teaching and writing about several years ago. It is this daily warm-up that has inspired the whimsical title, *Pumping Nylon*. But in the following pages Scott has done far more than merely map out an exercise routine.

He has provided a wealth of technical information not readily available elsewhere. He has also compiled a variety of both well- and lesser-known technical exercises such as the *120 Right-Hand Studies* of Mauro Giuliani and some arpeggio studies by Francesco Tarrega, and has offered some exercises of his own as well. It is also through Scott Tennant that four great new studies, two by Brian Head and two by Andrew York, have been written and published.

But I think he has done a lot more than even those things.

What students and teachers alike will find in *Pumping Nylon* is a joyful attitude toward problem-solving on the classical guitar. There is an underlying message that says if you are willing and able to look at an issue from a different perspective, and if you can bring the same creative powers that you bring to your music-making to your technical work, you can overcome obstacles. Furthermore, there's no law that says it can't be fun.

Anyone who has studied classical guitar is going to find *something* in this book that directly contradicts what you have been taught—or what you teach—about *something*. This is inevitable. But if you dismiss this work for that reason, you will be missing much. I encourage you to read on. Take a look at all the ideas presented here by this great player and teacher. You will come away better for it.

I expect that for years to come it will be commonplace to find well-worn copies of this book in students' hands. I am sure that for Scott Tennant, as for myself, that will be the biggest reward for this effort.

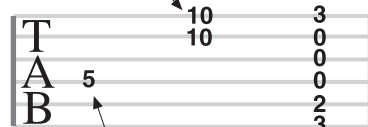
Many thanks to the wonderful people at Alfred Publishing—especially the M.I. team—for helping to make this and many other National Guitar Workshop books a reality.

Nathaniel Gunod  
Litchfield, Connecticut  
July, 1997

Nathaniel Gunod has edited many guitar books including Benjamin Verdery's *Some Towns and Cities: The Solos*, *Renaissance Masters in TAB* by Howard Wallach, *Progressive Classical Solos* and *Play Along Library: Renaissance Duets*. He also co-authored Benjamin Verdery's instructional video, *The Essentials of Classical Guitar* and directed the video, *Pumping Nylon with Scott Tennant*. He is the author of *Classical Guitar for Beginners*. A recitalist on Baroque, Classical period and modern classical guitars, he has taught students from all over the world at the Peabody Conservatory of Music and the National Guitar Workshop, where he is Associate Director. He is the founder of the NGSW Classical Guitar Seminar and the D'Addario Guitar Concerto Competition.

## How to Read Tablature

1st string, 10th fret ] -- Played together  
2nd string, 10th fret



An open G chord

An H over a slur — indicates a hammer-on.

A P over a slur — indicates a pull-off.

### #3 - Opposing Motion

You should practice this exercise two ways:

First, play each one *staccato*, with all the notes detached. Let the fingers of your left hand feel the spring upward between fingering changes. Remember not to spring upward any higher than one inch. After your fingers release the notes, instantly place them right above the next two notes. Take your time and play through each variation this way.

The next step is to play them as *legato* as possible, without a noticeable gap between the notes. To do this, stay on the strings until the last possible instant. Visualize your fingers going to the next two notes, then switch.

③ 3

④

T	2	1	2	3	2	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	2	3	2	1	2	1
A	1	2	1	2	3	2	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	2	3	2	1	2
B	2	1	2	3	2	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	2	3	2	1	2	1

②

④

T	2	1	2	3	2	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	2	3	2	1	2	1
A	1	2	1	2	3	2	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	2	3	2	1	2
B	2	1	2	3	2	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	2	3	2	1	2	1

②

⑤

T	2	1	2	3	2	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	2	3	2	1	2	1
A	1	2	1	2	3	2	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	2	3	2	1	2
B	2	1	2	3	2	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	2	3	2	1	2	1

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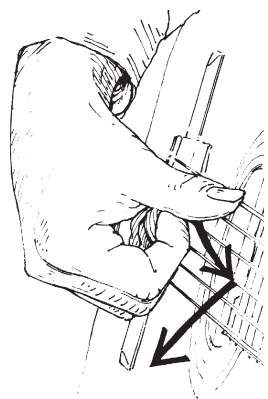
# Rasgueados

This is another flamenco technique which is sadly neglected by many classical guitarists. A *rasgueado* is really more of a percussive effect than a strum. It is done by hitting the strings with the backs of the nails.

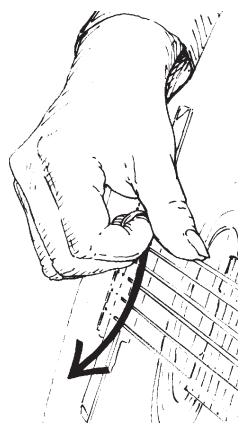
Practicing rasgueados develops the extensor muscles, which are the muscles that move the fingers outward, away from the palm. Many players believe that playing scales with considerable speed and accuracy is dependent upon how quickly we can move our fingers out, not in. This would certainly explain why most flamenco guitarists have the ability to play blazingly fast scales.

For now, practice your rasgueados by anchoring your thumb on the fourth string as you play on the first, second and third strings. It is helpful to begin by alternating only two fingers. Play the examples on the next page with the indicated alternation combinations.

*Attack the strings from just above ...*



*... not like this.*



On page 51 there are some rasgueado patterns that include all of the fingers. Some are traditional patterns, and some are a little out of the ordinary.

The letter “*c*” indicates the little finger (the pinky, *chiquito* in Spanish). For all the examples except numbers 3 and 6, keep the fingers extended until they have all finished playing.

Examples 8 through 12 involve an exchange between the thumb and the fingers (either all together or individually). This requires a particular motion of the wrist. The wrist should remain as straight as possible while pivoting, as if turning a doorknob. As the thumb plays its upstroke, the fingers follow it into a ready position. As the fingers play the downstroke(s), the thumb follows them into a ready position. In Examples 10 through 12, the thumb returns to a ready position only after *i* has played.