

REPertoire

EDUARDO INESTAL

Adelita (Tarrega)



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“IMAGE THIS PART IS LIKE AN ASTEROID COMING TO THE EARTH- AND IT’S GOING TO IMPACT YOU!”

LESSON DESCRIPTION



Francisco Tarrega wrote many miniatures for the guitar, one of which is the beautiful ‘Adelita’. In this lesson, Eduardo Inestal walks through the piece, examines its structure, and presents solutions for common finger issues. Eduardo first shares his personal connection to this piece, and goes on to provide a short analysis of its structure. Several recurring concepts help tie the lesson together, and keeping them in mind will help the diligent student practice with musicianship and efficiency.

Though the piece is simple, there is room for interpretation and lots of expression. By the end of the lesson, hopefully you will have an idea of how to tackle complicated fingerings and play ‘Adelita’ with grace and proper technique.





ABOUT YOUR INSTRUCTOR



Eduardo Inestal is considered one of the most important guitarists of his generation. Over the course of his career, Eduardo has obtained 14 prizes in international competitions and also has developed an important concert activity as soloist and chamber musician in Europe and America.

Eduardo currently teaches at the Robert Schumann University of Music and at the “Clara Schumann” Conservatory, both in Dusseldorf and is regularly invited to give master classes at numerous institutions and festivals.

OUTLINE

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PERSONAL STORY



This piece is one of several miniatures by Francisco Tarrega. The first time your instructor, Eduardo Inestal, listened to this piece, he was a small child. He had a recording of Spanish guitar music he would listen to before he went to sleep, performed by the great Eduardo Fernandez, although he didn't know it then.

This recording contained lots of short, beautiful Tarrega pieces- Adelita, Marieta, Lagrima, etc., and right away, he fell in love with the music. A few years later his guitar teacher assigned him some pieces by Tarrega, and he happily found out they were the same pieces he had heard years before. He went on to play these pieces in concerts, even while very young. Today he's going to take you through this piece and share valuable technical information and some simple analysis.



BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS



This piece by Tarrega was initially edited in Valencia in 1902 and published by the company 'Antich y Tena'. It isn't known why Tarrega named this piece 'Adelita', however his pupils have confided that Adelita was the daughter of Alfonso XIII, King of Spain, and also one of Tarrega's lovers. It's possible that he wrote this song for her, but it is, however, only speculation.

This piece's structure is quite simple- just an A and B, each 8 bars. It's helpful to divide the piece into even smaller phrases in order to approach it musically. Eduardo will take you through each measure of both parts, slowly, showing what's happening with voices, harmony, and fingerings.

Before you start, it's important to know that this piece is also called 'Mazurka'- which means 'dance'. Mazurka is a Polish 3-meter dance. This dance character should always remain, even though Tarrega wasn't writing an actual dance.

It's common for students to put a heavy accent on every bar of the beginning. Avoid heavy accents on each downbeat, and think only of one beat at a time.

The image shows a musical score for guitar in 3/4 time, starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The score is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first measure is marked with a forte (>) accent and contains a triplet of eighth notes (F#, G, A) and a quarter note (B). The second measure contains a quarter note (B) and a quarter rest. The third measure contains a quarter note (B) and a quarter rest. The fourth measure contains a quarter note (B) and a quarter rest. The fifth measure contains a quarter note (B) and a quarter rest. The sixth measure contains a quarter note (B) and a quarter rest. The seventh measure contains a quarter note (B) and a quarter rest. The eighth measure contains a quarter note (B) and a quarter rest. The score is labeled with 'CVII' above the fifth measure. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-4 above the notes. Accents (>) are placed above the first notes of the first and second measures. A dynamic marking of *p* is placed below the first measure.

BALANCE



This piece is structured around three voices- melody, bass, and accompaniment. There exists a hierarchy, where certain voices are more important than others. When we play, we usually mix the voices together, but we should be sure to separate them! Be clear about which notes belong to which voice, and play the voices at different dynamic levels. The accompaniment is always a bit softer than the melody. As an example, the 3rd beat doesn't belong to the melody, so be sure these notes are softer.

The image shows a musical score for guitar in 3/4 time. The melody is written on a treble clef staff, and the bass line is on a bass clef staff. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The piece starts with a dynamic marking of *p* (piano). The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes with various fingering numbers (1-4) and accents. The bass line consists of quarter notes, some with a tenuto mark. A bracket labeled 'CVII' spans the first four measures. The piece ends with a fermata over the final note.

BASS NOTES



The bass notes in this piece are very important to think about. Each of the first four bars have a different bass note, and they tell us what the harmony of that measure is. When we play the second bass note, we often forget about the first note. Don't forget- that note is still sounding. If we don't stop it from ringing, we have two different bass notes at the same time, and, more importantly, two different harmonies being implied. It should always be clear what the current harmony is, and it changes from measure to measure.

Cut the sixth string when fifth string A is played. You will have to cut bass notes very often in guitar literature, especially in this piece.



HARMONIC RESOLUTION

Part A is eight bars long, and we can split these bars into two, roughly identical, four measure phrases. The harmony is simple: E minor, A minor, B7, and back to E minor again. This harmonic structure is very common across all music. We can also think of the chord movement as tonic, subdominant, dominant, and tonic (respectively).

Playing with good phrasing means treating one spot of the phrase as most important. Drive the first few bars towards the dominant chord to get a good resolution. Start off piano, as notated, and add more intensity each bar until you peak at the dominant chord. The downbeat of the fourth bar is where you can finally resolve the tension.

For the second line, do the same thing, building tension from bar five to the beginning of bar eight. Musically, this is the simplest interpretation. Imagine how this fits in with the rhythm of the mazurka, or, the dance.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Keep the feeling of the dance always present, but don't accent every bar. Drive the phrasing to the dominant chord by building up tension and resolving it on the fourth bar.

FINGER STABILITY

Next, Eduardo talks about fingerings he uses, the mechanics of his hand, and solutions to common problems.

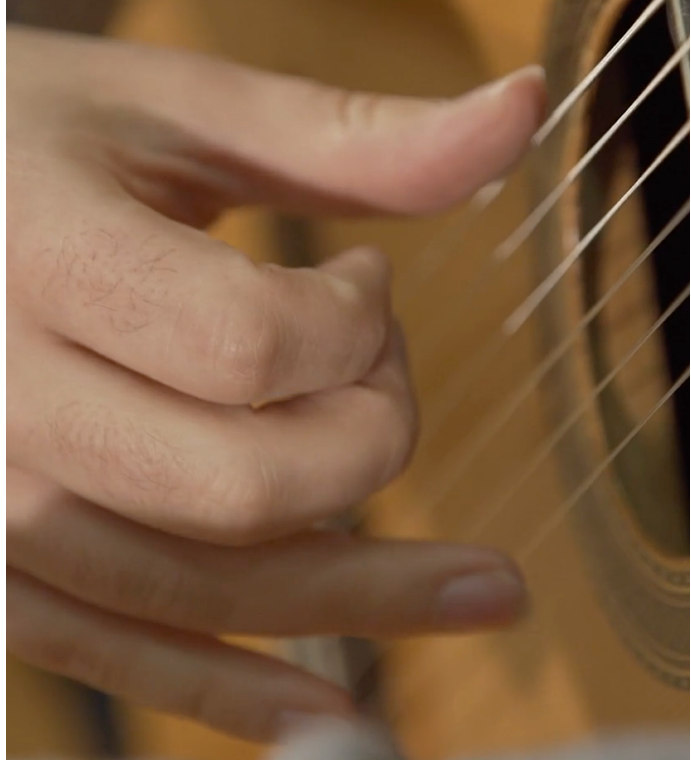
In the very first measure, students often play the bass and melody at different times. He recommends starting both notes on the downbeat, at the same time, to establish a clear pulse right away.

It's very important to create stability in the left hand. Eduardo prepares his first finger so it's ready to shift to the B on the second beat.



He prepares all three fingers for the first beat so that, when he shifts to play the B, the hand stays the same shape. Then, his index and middle fingers play the second and third strings.

Eduard also tries to give his right hand a clear structure by assigning fingers to certain voices and strings. As often as possible, his thumb plays the bass, and he assigns his fingers this way: index on 3rd, middle finger on 2nd, and ring on 1st. Practicing like this provides more stability and accuracy to your fingers, and requires less movement.



Don't forget that the accompaniment should always be softer than the melody!

In the second measure, stop the sixth string with your thumb as soon as possible to avoid both harmonies sounding simultaneously. Keep your hand relaxed in order to maintain good phrasing. The more relaxed you are, the more beautiful and natural the music will sound.

Prepare the barre in the third measure by lowering your first finger at the end of the second measure. At the same time, move the second finger closer to where it's going to land on the second beat.

Prepare the barre as Eduardo does in this image, at the end of the second measure. The closer the fingers are to the fretboard, the more accuracy you'll have.



How does Eduardo stop the A in the bass? By playing this barre in the third measure, the A cuts off automatically.

LEGATO

To play legato in the fourth measure, hold the third finger on the G from measure three as long as possible. The phrase ends on the B in the fourth measure. The next note, E, is the beginning of the second phrase.

Going into the downbeat of measure five, prepare the first finger in advance so it's ready and the music is smooth. Leave the first finger on the string between the B and G.

This second phrase, in measures five through eight, is technically the same. The final measure is different, however, and there are two things to do with it. First, make the final two notes as legato as possible by not lifting the fingers all the way in between. Leave the third finger on the string, and slide to the fifth fret to keep the notes connected.



Second, if you release the barre too quickly, all the open strings sound. Let go of the string really carefully and slowly, otherwise it can be a quite unpleasant sound if you ever make a recording of the piece.

B SECTION

The B section, in bar nine, is very much a contrast from the A section. While the A section is in E Minor, the B section is in E Major, completely changing the character. Together with the new tonality, the dynamic jumps up to forte. The structure is the same as the first section- it consists of two phrases, each four bars in length.

CIV CIV CIV CIX CVII

9 *f* *un poco rit.*

13 *a tempo* *p* *rit.* D.C. al Fine

In the second phrase, the melody is one octave lower than in the first phrase. Maintain the balance of different voices even when the melody changes range.

There are many bass notes that ring in this section, meaning you need to stop them on the fifth and sixth strings. Leaving them to ring creates a very chaotic sound. To keep the dance feeling light and animated, Eduardo prefers to cut the notes with his thumb before the next bass comes in.

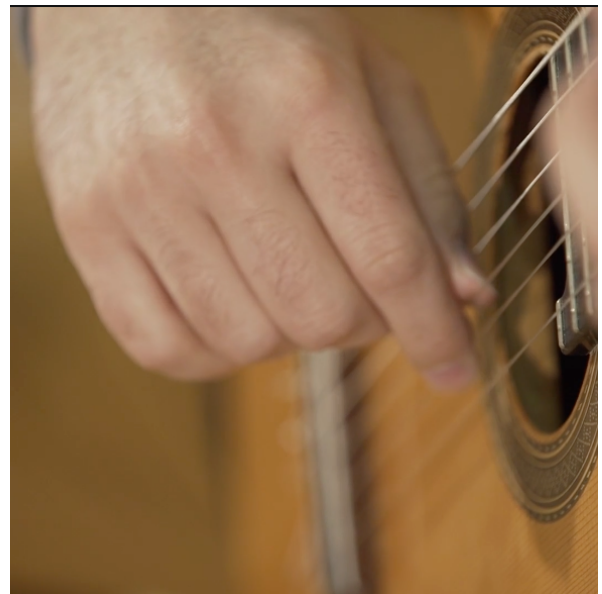
To stop the fifth string, he plays the sixth string apoyando. This way the thumb passes over the sixth and hits the fifth. In one stroke he can prepare the sixth string and stop a bass note.



PHRASING



Again, the melody should be highlighted, and the accompaniment more subdued. In this phrase, the high point is the high E in measure 11. Make the melody grow up to that note. Eduardo wants to hear ONLY that note when it comes, so he stops all other voices at that moment. To do this, he plays the high E apoyando which will stop the second string. At the same time, he puts his thumb on the third string and moves his right hand slightly so his thumb stops all notes in between.



On the other side of this phrase, go back down in volume to prepare the second phrase.

Eduardo thinks the effect of a slow ritard and diminuendo in measure 12 keeps the phrasing and connectedness very strong. Maintain legato, even though it can sometimes lead to uncomfortable stretches, as from the B to G# going to measure 13!

KEY TAKEAWAY

Make sure the melody is always above the accompaniment, and the phrases are all legato.

STOPPING NOTES

To keep his hand as stable as possible in measures 13 and 14, Eduardo plays both the bass and the melody with his thumb. He leaves the first finger on the string when he shifts down to the third beat. Don't forget to stop the bass notes!



The high G# in measure 14 is another high spot where you should try to cut all other notes from sounding. Play the G# apoyando with your index finger to stop the third string, play your thumb on the fourth finger to stop the basses, and stop the first string with your ring finger.

A slight fermata on the G# allows the beautiful sound of that note to ring out.

Slide your left hand for the D# as you prepare for the cadence. The last beat of 14 can also have a slight fermata.

EXPRESSIVE DEVICES



To generate contrast, play much more rhythmically and accented in 15 and 16.

Prepare the first finger on the third string at the beginning of 15, this way it's ready for the low E at the end of 16.

When you play A# in measure 14, it's important to stop the first string. Eduardo puts his ring finger on the first string and his index finger on the third string until the end. The final two chords of the piece, the cadence, can be difficult to play legato. After playing the dominant chord, leave the fourth finger down until the last possible moment- right before the tonic chord.

13 *a tempo* *p rit.* D.C. al Fine

Why not play eighth position for the last half of measure 14, as Tarrega originally notated? Eduardo thinks the sound farther up the neck is clearer and brighter. The final choice is up to you, as long as you remember all the ideas Eduardo has talked about.

When we go back to the more moody-sounding minor, the character changes again. Remember that the B section is going to repeat again. This repeat can be a bit monotonous, so you can make some kind of change if you'd like. Eduardo likes to play measure 12 the opposite of how he played it before. Instead of a ritardando and diminuendo, he likes to do an accelerando and crescendo! This is just his personal approach, but it's a nice way to change the pace.

This concludes this tutorial on this beautiful Tarrega miniature! Hopefully this covers some basic problems you may have when practicing this piece. Good luck!



RESOURCES



Eduardo Inestal's lesson On Muting Notes

In this lesson, Eduardo briefly talks about muting certain notes but felt it was important to do a whole separate lesson on the topic itself. Learn about this crucial topic that can be applied to all your rep!

Andrea De Vitis's lesson on Prelude No. 2 (Tarrega)

Ready for some more Tarrega? We thought so! Check out this lesson on the second of his famous preludes for guitar, taught here by Italian virtuoso Andrea De Vitis.



