

Contents

Preface		vii
Chapter One	The Principle of Functional Tension Dysfunctional Tension; Functional Tension: Leverage from the Fingers; Seating; Conclusions	1
Chapter Two	The Left Hand Mechanics of Left-Hand Position; The Bar (Barré, Capotasto, Cejilla); Principles of Movement (I): The Role of the Arm; Dexterity of the Fingers; Principles of Movement (II): The Role of Anticipation	13
Chapter Three	Right-Hand Position Dysfunctional Tensions of the Hand; Forming the Position; Engaging the Nails; Thumb Position; Engaging the Thumbnail; The Value of Preparation	35
Chapter Four	Nail Filing The Thumbnail; The Filing Process; Nail Care	50
Chapter Five	Articulation	60
Chapter Six	Coordination and Velocity Scales; Velocity in Scales; Chords; Homophonic and Contrapuntal Textures	70

Chapter Seven	Expressive Devices	87
	Slurs As Accent; Vibrato; Right-Hand Flourishes; Grace, Emphasis, Closure; Rasgueado	
Chapter Eight	The Art of Classical Guitar Playing	105
	Refinement of Tone; Contrast of Tone Color; Control of Rhythm; Developing the Line: Thinking Upbeats; Expressive Nuances: Segovia's Example	
Appendix:	A Practice Checklist	119
	Selected Bibliography	125
	Notes	129

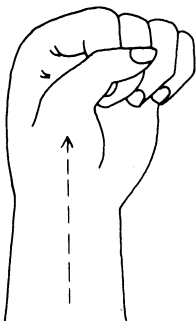
CHAPTER TWO

The Left Hand

A fine baritone once observed that in guitar playing, the left hand appeared to be the hand of technique and the right hand, the hand of expression. The remark has the startling clarity that can make a casual observation more illuminating than analysis. Of course the right hand has a technique whose challenges are nearly as great as those for the left hand. Nonetheless, they concern the refinement of just a few practical finger deployments upon the six strings. In contrast, the lateral-longitudinal grid of the fingerboard offers nearly a hundred possible targets for the left hand in any number of single points to four-finger combinations. And while there are frequently differing expressive possibilities in different left-hand fingerings of a given passage (even ignoring the use of vibrato), the original proposition holds true. Of the two hands the left is the workhorse; and it is in that sense that we must first address the use of the left hand.

MECHANICS OF LEFT-HAND POSITION

The underlying physiology of left-hand technique is related to other forms of holding, grasping, and carrying—at least as regards the hand itself; the dexterity requirements of the fingers are in a different though related realm. In most forms of such activity, common sense (or gravity) will put the hand and arm into alignment:



Any significant deviation weakens the grip. The truth of this can quickly be proved by the following test: make a fist, and squeeze your fingers and hand as though you were carrying an imaginary suitcase. Now, still squeezing, flex your hand to the side; then flex it forward, then backward.

CHAPTER FIVE

Articulation

The term *articulation* refers in music to the manner in which tones are attacked and released and is distinct from *phrasing*, which pertains more to how they are grouped for expressive purpose. In the main sense, articulation has to do with a player's control of note length, irrespective of written rests. From a staccato which reduces nominal note value by more than half to a legato in which notes are given full value and joined without a perceptible break, there are many possibilities.

The term also can refer, in the technique of winds and strings particularly, to the degree of percussiveness in the attack. Attack quality should not be confused with dynamic intensity; highly articulated notes may be played either loud or soft. Rather, it is more akin to the effect that different consonants have upon the same vowel sound in speech. In this sense, the difference between legato and staccato is roughly the difference between the word *oar* and the word *toe* if either is repeated in sequence. It can be diagrammed as follows:¹

