

**AN ANALYTICAL AND COMPARATIVE STUDY OF FRANCISCO TÁRREGA'S
TWO VOLUMES OF GUITAR STUDIES: VOLUME ONE–THIRTY
ELEMENTARY LEVEL STUDIES AND VOLUME TWO–TWENTY-FIVE
INTERMEDIATE AND ADVANCED LEVEL STUDIES**

**A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
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DOCTOR OF ARTS
BY**

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This analytical and comparative study focuses on the elementary- and advanced-level studies for the guitar written by Francisco Tárrega (1852-1909). Through a study of these works the reader will be helped to understand Tárrega's purpose for each study and this will significantly improve one's ability in the fields of performance and teaching. Tárrega was a remarkable guitar educator, performer, and composer. In the history of the Spanish guitar, it was Tárrega that set the modern sitting position, right-hand technique, and left-hand technique based on Antonio de Torres' (1817-1892) guitar. According to Julian Bream (b. 1933), one of the great contemporary guitarists, it is by no means idle speculation to suggest that, without the design of the Torres guitar, Tárrega's vital contribution to guitar technique would have been minimal.¹ Based on the shape, size, and general construction of the guitar as established by Torres, it was Tárrega that defined more details about playing the guitar such as the rest stroke and the free stroke playing styles for the right hand. Tárrega's pupils, including Pascual Roch (1860-1921), Miguel Llobet (1878-1938), Maria Rita Brondi (1889-1941), and Emilio Pujol (1886-1980), presented successful recitals and engaged in musicological activities that helped to establish the guitar on a firm footing. Both Roch and

¹ José Romanillos, *Antonio de Torres Guitar Maker—His Life and Work* (Great Britain: Element Book Ltd., 1987), vii.

Pujol wrote three volumes of methods and they became the foundation of the “School of Tárrega.” It was Tárrega and Tárrega alone whose vital contributions to the guitar allowed the guitar maestro Andrés Segovia’s (1893-1987) to project the guitar into the early twentieth century.

Tárrega composed a significant number of works for the guitar, such as preludes, studies, and some of his famous pieces include *Recuerdos de la Alhambra* and *Capricho Árabe*.² Besides these compositions, he was one of the first to successfully transcribe considerable repertoire from other composers, such as J. S. Bach’s *Fugue* from *Violin Sonata No. 1*, Ludwig van Beethoven’s second movement (Adagio cantabile) from *Piano Sonata No. 8 (Pathétique Sonata)*, and the first movement (Adagio sostenuto) from *Piano Sonata No. 14 (Moonlight Sonata)*. Even Richard Wagner’s *Prelude* and *March* from *Tannhäuser* were successfully transcribed and performed. Most of his transcriptions were very successful; in particular, the piano pieces of Isaac Albéniz (1860-1909) were regarded by the composer himself as sounding better on the guitar.³ Both his original compositions and transcriptions require solid techniques and delicate musical interpretations. Among Tárrega’s masterpieces, the focus of this study will be an examination of Tárrega’s thirty elementary-level studies and twenty-five intermediate- and advanced-level studies. Among these fifty-five studies, sixteen of the elementary studies were previously unpublished: 1 to 6, 8, 10-11, 14, 16-19, 23 and 27. Three of the advanced studies were previously unpublished: 4, 17, and 23 of the Soneto edition, edited by Mechor Rodríguez García. Thus, this writer will be presenting critical commentary for the first time on these previously unpublished nineteen studies.

² Harvey Turnbull, *The Guitar from the Renaissance to the Present Day* (Westport, CT: The Bold Strummer LTD., 1974), 107.

³ Ibid.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to promote an understanding of the principles of the “School of Tárrega” by analyzing Tárrega’s thirty elementary-level studies and twenty-five intermediate- and advanced-level studies. These studies were used by Tárrega in giving classes to his disciples with the aim of helping them to overcome the characteristic difficulties of guitar playing. Throughout the analysis references will be made to the Roch and the Pujol methods. It is important to note that Pujol and Roch wrote their methods according to their learning experience from Tárrega; they did not discuss Tárrega’s fifty-five elementary and advanced studies in particular.

Secondly, this writer will present a clear picture of the purpose of each study. Tárrega composed the studies; however, he did not indicate the technical problems the studies were designed to overcome. The writer first divided the studies based on the following related technical considerations:

1.) Scale playing in elementary studies numbers 1, 10, 11, 13, 18, 20, 21, and 30 as well as advanced studies numbers 1, 5, and 21.

2.) Arpeggio playing in elementary studies numbers 2, 4, 8, 16, 17, 24, and 28 as well as advanced studies numbers 4, 6, 7, 10, 12, 15, 16, 19, 23, 24, and 25.

3.) Blocked chord playing in elementary studies numbers: 3, 5, 14, 16, 17, 22, 23, 26, 27, and 29 as well as advanced studies numbers 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 19, 20, and 22.

4.) Slur technique in elementary studies numbers 19 and 30 as well as advanced studies numbers 8, 15, 16, 23, 24, and 25.

5.) Barré technique in elementary studies numbers 8 and 26 as well as advanced studies numbers 16 and 18.

6.) Pizzicato, harmonics, and tremolo techniques in advanced studies numbers 14, 18, and 21.

Thirdly, this writer will thoroughly examine the logic of the fingering of these studies as one of the practical ways to comprehend Tárrega's musical world. Additionally, other possible fingerings will be illustrated based on modern methods by modern guitarists such as Christopher Berg, Charles Duncan, Richard Provost, Hector Quine, Aaron Shearer, Scott Tennant, and Christopher Parkening.

And finally, where appropriate, this writer will highlight those aspects of Tárrega's technique that appear to be in conflict with contemporary guitar performance practice. In those situations the reader is invited to carefully study the apparent conflicts and draw his or her own conclusions as to how to proceed.

The ultimate goal of learning these elementary and advanced studies is not only to develop playing skills but to foster mature musical playing and to thoroughly and clearly understand Tárrega's vital contributions to the guitar.

Significance of the Study

Tárrega's elementary and advanced studies are important for the guitar student because of Tárrega's vital contributions to modern guitar technique as previously stated. The elementary studies will be helpful in establishing basic playing techniques while the advanced studies will polish one's playing skills and enhance interpretations simultaneously. There is

no doubt that Tárrega's studies are well worth the time needed to analyze and practice toward the goal of developing musicianship. It is believed that this writer is one of the first to thoroughly analyze Tárrega's fifty-five guitar studies from a pedagogical point of view regarding scale, arpeggio, blocked chord playing, and slur, barré, pizzicato, harmonics, and tremolo techniques. Furthermore, as noted before, there are nineteen previously unpublished studies in the Soneto edition which will be formally analyzed for the first time. Additionally, this writer is also the first one to present Tárrega's ideas on guitar technique in juxtaposition to contemporary guitar performance practice.

The history of the guitar is closely associated with the development of this instrument and this is the reason that the influence of Tárrega is monumental.⁴ The origins of the guitar can be traced to the time when the Moors invaded Spain and brought the guitar shape to the country around the eighth century. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the vihuela was dominant. It usually has twelve strings which are paired (six-course), and it is considered to be the precursor to the modern classical guitar. Co-existing through the sixteenth century along with the vihuela was the four-course, Renaissance guitar. Compared to the vihuela, the four-course guitar is smaller with fewer strings.⁵ During the Baroque period, the five-course guitar was developed. On the five-course guitar, everything that was possible on the four-course could be done with more power and resonance. The six single-string guitar appeared in the early nineteenth century. As mentioned previously, the most important thing to happen later in this period of time was that Tárrega established the modern playing technique based on Torres' new guitar. Torres gave the modern classical

⁴ Adrián Rius, *Francisco Tárrega Biography* (Valencia: Piles Editorial de Musica, 2006), 12.

⁵ Graham Wade, *A Concise History of the Classic Guitar* (Pacific, MO: Mel Bay Publications, 2001), 25.

guitar its definitive form, with a broadened body, increased waist curve, thinned belly, and improved internal bracing.⁶ Through this brief review of the development of the guitar, it is not hard to imagine that playing technique was influenced greatly by this new instrument. Because Tárrega's technique is based on Torres' guitar, therefore, the School of Tárrega becomes an invaluable topic for discussion from an historical and pedagogic perspective.

A thorough study of the School of Tárrega will be beneficial to every guitarist. Before Tárrega, there were many distinguished guitarists who contributed a great deal to the teaching of the guitar, such as Fernando Sor (1778-1839) and Dionisio Aguado (1784-1849). Their methods were sufficiently complete and valuable during their time. For example, in Sor's *Method for the Guitar* (1830), he discussed not only technique but also harmony, sonority, composition, and above all, music as an art. His book also included details about guitar construction and makers. In his method, he preferred left-hand fingerings in a lower position and favored the stronger first, second, and third finger. Compared to modern technique, the most fundamental difference was that he advised guitar players not to use the ring finger of the right hand except in a few cases. He preferred a fixed position for the right hand, with index finger on the second string, middle finger on the third string, and thumb covering the others. Current players, on the other hand, prefer to develop all the fingers equally.⁷ Aguado, another Spanish classical guitar composer, became friends with and for a while lived with Sor. On the other hand, Sor preferred a no-nail, flesh technique for tone production while Aguado played with nails. Aguado's use of the nails as part of his performing technique was

⁶ Turnbull, 77.

⁷ David Tanebaum, *The Essential Studies of Fernando Sor's 20 Estudios* (San Francisco, CA: Guitar Solo publication, 1991), 5.

recognized in the twentieth century as linking up with the preeminent Segovia's concepts of right-hand playing.⁸ Just like Sor and Aguado, whose methods and compositions are still studied by many, Tárrega's contributions are equally valuable and admired.

The development of the guitar and its teaching methods never stop. For example, it appears that more performers are using amplified classical guitars when ensemble music and concertos are performed. Will this become the standard for the future? Will this bring any new techniques? There are still many ongoing debates. However, what people can do is keep records of the history of the guitar. It was the Torres guitar that moved Tárrega to advance the technique of the guitar and inspired him to write the studies that are the basis of this dissertation. Tárrega and Torres, a guitarist and guitar maker, are both important links between the tradition that was established during the latter years of the eighteenth century and the present. Today, a hundred years have passed since the death of Tárrega. No matter how the guitar will change or how different playing techniques will be in the future, guitar players and educators can always learn from a thorough study of the School of Tárrega.

Method

This study will be in three parts. The first two parts are included in chapter three. The first part will focus on the principles of the School of Tárrega, such as knowledge of the fingerboard, sitting and playing position, and tone quality. These are issues all beginning musicians should deal with, and the first few lessons will greatly influence a student's future study. In addition, playing technique will be somewhat different depending upon the structure of the guitar, such as the length of the strings, the width of the neck of the guitar,

⁸ Wade, *A Concise History of the Classic Guitar*, 82.

and the number of strings. It was Tárrega who laid the foundations of modern technique according to Antonio Torres' new guitar. For example, the support of the instrument on the left leg became standard because of Tárrega. Additionally, Tárrega advocated a method of plucking the strings by the fingers of the right hand (rest stroke), and a wider use of the right-hand ring finger.⁹ Because of these innovations, it is essential to review the principles of guitar playing in order to truly understand the spirit of the School of Tárrega.

The second part of this study is a specific discussion of the mobility of each finger of both hands. This discussion will be organized according to difficulty. It starts with the initial plucking of each finger; it then moves to instructions for plucking on adjacent strings between index and middle fingers and then between middle and ring fingers. The second emphasis involves playing two notes simultaneously followed by three-note and then four-note chords. After players have a clear understanding of playing chords, the third emphasis focuses on playing both descending and ascending arpeggios. Later, rules about changing positions, instructions for descending and ascending slurs, the independence of each finger, and harmonics will be stressed. In addition, scales of major and minor keys are discussed in the first position. In his book, Pujol used the term "quadruplet" instead of first position, which means that these scales should be learned first and played primarily using the first four frets. After understanding these mechanical principles and putting them into practice of Tárrega's studies, it will become easier to overcome the technical difficulties that the guitar presents because the strength, elasticity, precision, and agility of the fingers are developed gradually and effectively. As long as a player is able to give great attention to the movements

⁹ Theodorus Hofmeester, "Is There A School Of Tárrega?" *Guitar Review* 1 (1946): 5.

of the fingers, musical ideas can be successfully communicated between the performer and his audience.

The third part, chapter four, will be a comparative analysis of Tárrega's thirty elementary-level studies and twenty-five intermediate- and advanced-level studies. These guitar studies will be grouped according to their purposes and textures, such as scale playing, arpeggio playing, blocked chords, and special techniques as previously stated. A study will have its greatest influence on technique when its purpose is correctly understood; therefore, organizing these studies into groups will allow guitar players to realize the purpose and characteristics of each study more easily. In addition, it is almost impossible to learn every guitar study ever written because there are so many. The most effective way to develop solid technique is to understand what the weaknesses of one's playing is, and then address and practice specific studies to improve certain techniques. The difficulties and their possible resolutions are discussed, and then some suggestions from a performer's perspective will be added based on the Pujol and the Roch books as well as modern methods.

Review of the Literature

Books by Adrián Rius offer abundant information about Tárrega's biography, while Pujol's and Roch's methods are extremely practical from the perspective of pedagogy. Rius is a Spanish guitarist and his passion for the work of Tárrega has led him to write Tárrega's biography accompanied with valuable letters, pictures, and manuscripts. Tárrega was born on 21 November 1852, in Villarreal, Castellón, Spain. He entered the Real Conservatorio, Madrid, in 1874, where he studied piano and harmony. At this period of his life he began his lifelong task of transcribing music for the guitar from other instruments. His repertoire at

the time is said to have included works by Fernando Sor, Dionisio Aguado, Julián Arcas (1832-1882), and some of his own transcriptions. In March 1881, Tárrega went to France where he played a number of recitals in both Lyons and Paris, including a performance in the presence of Queen Isabel II, Princess Mathilde, and Baron Rothschild. In 1884 Tárrega gave a concert in collaboration with Issac Albéniz (1860-1909) in Barcelona, where he lived in 1888. He still traveled to many places for performances, such as Perpignan (France), Cadiz (Spain), Nice (France), Mallorca (Spain), Paris, and Valencia. In Valencia, he met Conxa Martinez. She was a rich widow and she lent him and his family a house in Sant Gervasi, Barcelona. It was there that Tárrega composed a majority of his famous masterpieces.¹⁰ Tárrega continued to perform throughout his life. His programs included his own compositions as well as transcriptions from Frédéric Chopin, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Franz Schubert, Felix Mendelssohn, Giuseppe Verdi, and Albéniz. Tárrega died in 1909, on 15 December, at the age of 57.

Emilio Pujol began his studies with Tárrega at the Conservatory of Barcelona in 1901. His books *Guitar School Book One, Two, and Three* are theoretical and practical methods for the guitar based on the principles of Tárrega. The first volume offers an overall background of the development of music notation, playing posture, and general technique. The second volume contains extensive instructions of how to train the mobility of the fingers. Some short exercises are included with clear explanations. The third volume is more about advanced techniques such as the use of the barré and slur, and the reach and span between the fingers. These three books are considered to be scholastic, yet it is the balanced

¹⁰ Rius, 104

exercise progression followed by detailed playing suggestions that make these books invaluable guides to the guitar.

Besides Pujol's methods, Pasucal Roch's *Modern Method for Guitar According to the School of Tárrega, Book One, Two, and Three*, published in 1921 by the G. Schirmer Publishing House of New York, is another important resource for an understanding of Tárrega's teaching. Roch was born in Valencia, Spain in 1860 and died in 1921 in Havana, Cuba. He was a student and an admirer of Tárrega, and he was also famous as a concert artist and guitar builder. He collected manuscripts of pieces and exercises by Tárrega and published them in Spanish, French, and English.¹¹ There are practical suggestions of training in regard to the School of Tárrega. Many issues are thoroughly discussed such as barré technique and the playing of scales, arpeggios, legatos, slurs, and harmonics. Included are some compositions by Tárrega along with playing advice. Tárrega dedicated a large portion of his time to the teaching of the guitar. In his book, Roch mentions that Tárrega even proposed to write a guitar method book; although it appears that he never did.¹² Books by Pujol and Roch, therefore, will be one of the main resources to greatly enhance an understanding of Tárrega's musical world.

Tárrega's *Thirty Elementary Level Studies* and *Twenty-Five Studies for Intermediate and Advanced Level* will be analyzed and discussed. These two volumes were published based purely on original manuscripts by publisher Soneto Ediciones Musicales. The former focuses largely on fundamental technique issues while the latter was written for advanced students.

¹¹ Ibid., 76.

¹² Ibid., 12.

Related literature from Christopher Berg’s *Mastering Guitar Technique: Process & Essence*, Charles Duncan’s *The Art of Classical Guitar Playing*, Richard Provost’s *Classic Guitar Technique—Volume One: Scale Source Book* and *Volume Two: Arpeggio Source Book*, Hector Quine’s *Guitar Technique—Intermediate to Advanced*, Aaron Shearer’s *Learning the Classic Guitar—Part 1, Part 2, and Part 3*, Scott Tennant’s *Pumping Nylon—The Classical Guitarist’s Technique Handbook*, and Christopher Parkening’s *The Christopher Parkening Guitar Method, Volume One and Two* will be studied. These current methods will be used to show how Tárrega’s technique has evolved into our modern technique.

Glossary

It will be easier for the reader to fully comprehend this research if some specific terms and symbols are explained in advance. In a musical score (Figure 1), the circled numbers indicate strings. Circle 1 is the highest string, and circle 6 is the lowest string. The right-hand fingers (Figure 2) are identified by the first letter of the Spanish terms *pulgar*, *indice*, *medio*, *anular*, and *chico* and the left-hand fingers (except the thumb) are identified by Arabic numbers. In this study, all the right-hand fingerings (*p-i-m-a-c*) will be written in italics.

Figure 1: Open String Notation

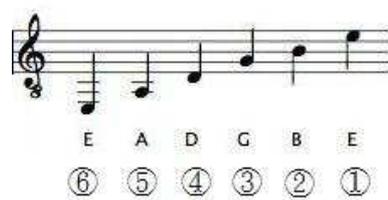
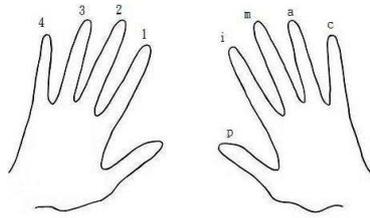


Figure 2: Fingerings of Both Hands



Right Hand

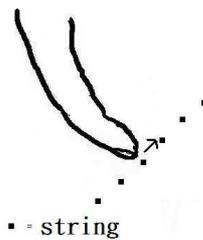
Free Stroke: when making a stroke, the right-hand finger does not come to rest against the next lower string (Figure 3).

Rest Stroke: when making a stroke, the right-hand finger comes to rest against the next, lower string (Figure 4).

Figure 3: Free Stroke



Figure 4: Rest Stroke



Sequential Planting: playing an arpeggio by planting one finger after another; each finger planting at the moment when the one before it is playing. For example, when an arpeggio needs to be played in the order of *p-i-m-a*, the following finger movement is required: As *p* plays, *i* plants; as *i* plays, *m* plants; as *m* plays, *a* plants; and so on.

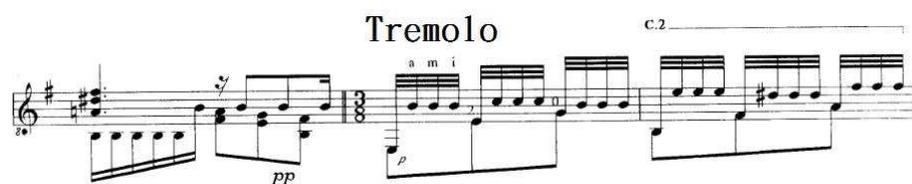
String Crossing: playing from one string to an adjacent string. However, sometimes this movement will become challenging when skipping one or more strings is required or when the right-hand fingering is unnatural. Figure 5 illustrates an unnatural fingering. The natural fingering to play F and G is *i-m* or *m-a* because G is on a higher string. If one plays these two consecutive notes with the *m-i* fingering, the index finger crosses the middle finger, which is considered as an unnatural fingering.

Figure 5: String Crossing Notation



Tremolo: a rapid repetition of the same note. In classical guitar it refers to a repeated melody note with an added bass line, giving the illusion of two instruments playing together. It is usually played using the following right-hand fingering: *p-a-m-i*.

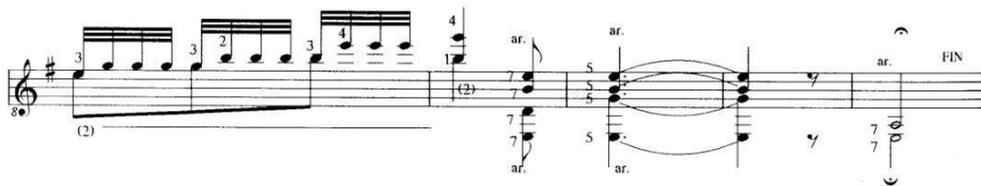
Figure 6: Tremolo Notation



Harmonics: overtones produced when players lightly touch a string at nodal points with the left hand while plucking the string with the right hand. These nodal points work best at frets 12, 7, and 5, and they are called *natural harmonics*. The sounding will be one octave, one octave and a fifth, or two octaves above the open note depending on which fret is played.

Artificial harmonics are produced when the right index finger lightly touches a string 12 frets higher than a fretted note while the right-hand thumb or ring finger plucks it. This allows players to make any note a harmonic, and the artificial harmonic will sound an octave higher than the fretted note. To designate a harmonic in a musical score, abbreviations such as *harm.* or *ar. harm* will be marked next to a note, accompanied by a fret number (Figure 7), or it could be notated as a diamond-shaped note indicating the actual sounding pitch.

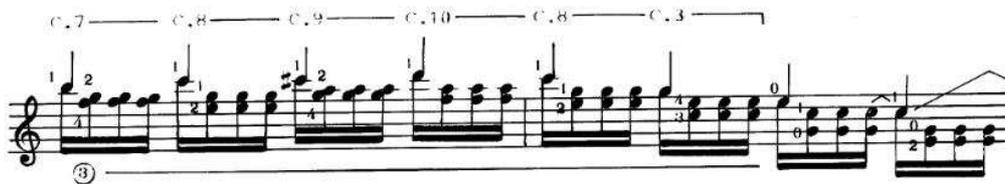
Figure 7: Harmonics Notation



Left Hand

Barré: to depress more than one string simultaneously on a single fret with the index finger of the left hand. A full barré is to depress all six strings. To depress two to five strings is called a partial barré. A capital C (*cejilla* in Spanish) or a Roman numeral is used for notating a barré (Figure 8).

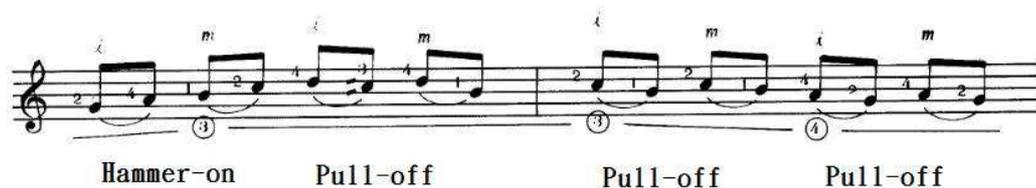
Figure 8: Barré Notation



Slur: plucking one note and then sounding the following note(s) with a left-hand finger only.

There are two types of slurs. When executing an ascending slur, or *hammer-on*, a player brings a left-hand fingertip down on a string with sufficient force to sound a second note after plucking the first note. The second type is a descending slur, or a *pull-off*, when the left-hand finger actually plucks the string as it is taken off; the finger pulls downward and into the next, higher string. A line between two different notes is used for notating a slur (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Slur Notation



Pivot Finger: a left-hand finger that remains stationary while other fingers move to new positions. In Figure 10, the E in the first measure and the F in the second are the pivot fingers.

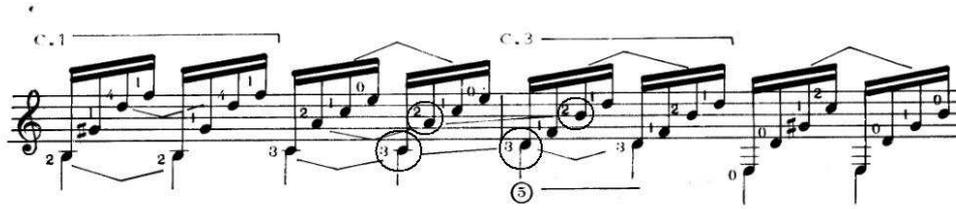
Figure 10: Pivot Finger Notation



Guide Finger: a left-hand finger that does not entirely leave the string when moving to a new note. In Figure 11, the third finger is a guide finger that switches from C to D (the last

quarter-note in the first measure to the first quarter-note in the second measure). Similarly, the circled second finger is a guide finger as well that switches from A to B.

Figure 11: Guide Finger Notation



CHAPTER TWO

BIOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND OF FRANCISCO TÁRREGA

Francisco Tárrega was born on Sunday, November 21, 1852, in Villarreal, Castellón, Spain. His father, Francisco Tárrega Tirado, and his mother, Antonia Eixea Broch, were married in the convent of San Pascual. Tárrega was named Francisco de Asís Tárrega y Eixea because the first-born child in every home took the names of both parents. Two years later, his mother nicknamed him 'Quiquet.' Tárrega's father worked as a security guard and his mother did chores for the local nuns. Tárrega's father played flamenco and several other musical styles on his guitar. When his father was working, Tárrega would take his father's guitar and attempt to imitate beautiful sounds.¹³

During the period of time when Tárrega's father became ill, Antonia felt it was necessary to leave her children in the care of a neighbor so she could take care of her sick husband. Unfortunately, Tárrega's nanny became angry about something that Tárrega did, and she threw him into a canal close to their house as punishment. Some neighbors walking past the house who witnessed what happened raced over to pull him from the water, preventing him from possibly drowning. This incident severely affected his eyesight and was

¹³ Rius, 18.

the origin of eye problems that required many operations but never came to a successful conclusion.¹⁴

Since Tárrega showed a great interest in music, his father allowed him to study music formally. It is true that the guitar was still regarded as an accompanying instrument, so his father decided to let Tárrega learn the piano instead of the guitar. During that period of time, his first music teacher was Eugeni Ruiz, who gave Tárrega lessons in piano. Ruiz was a blind musician and a pianist at a local Café. However, Tárrega's passion was still the guitar, and his father introduced him to Manuel González. González was known in the area as *El Ciego de la Marina* (the Blind Man of the Sea), but he was not totally blind. He earned a living by selling guitars, performing, and teaching, and he was the best guitar player in Castellón at that time.

In 1862, the concert guitarist Julián Arcas gave a program in Castellón. After the concert, Tárrega had the chance to play the guitar for Arcas. Arcas was impressed by Tárrega's playing and advised his father to bring him to Barcelona to study with him. However, Tárrega had only a few lessons before Arcas left for a concert tour abroad. Although he was only ten years old, he ran away and tried to start a musical career by playing in cafeterias, pubs, and restaurants in Barcelona. He was soon found and brought back to his father, but later in 1865, he ran away again to Valencia where he played music with a gang of gypsies. His father brought him back home once more, but he ran away a third time to Valencia. Because of these performing experiences, Tárrega was proficient on both the piano and the guitar by his early teens. There was one night that Tárrega had to play a guitar with only four strings because he ran out of money to buy new strings. He improvised his concert

¹⁴ Rius, 18.

that day with the four remaining strings.¹⁵ In spite of his talent, he could not earn enough money by playing the guitar and piano. He eventually returned home to help his family.

Young Tárrega enrolled at the Madrid Conservatory in 1874. He studied piano with professors Miguel Galiana and Rafael Hernando as well as music theory with José Gainza. According to Tárrega's pupil, Julio Gómez, Tárrega played on the piano before his classmates with a perfect sense of rhythm and interpretation. He even played the lessons backwards from end to beginning without making any mistakes.¹⁶ During that period, Emilio Arrieta was the director of the Conservatory. After hearing Tárrega's playing, Arrieta invited Tárrega to play the guitar for the university faculty and encouraged Tárrega to focus on the guitar for his musical career. Tárrega received much acclaim for his playing and began traveling to other areas of Spain to perform. Among Tárrega's admirers there was a rich merchant named Antonio Cánesa Mendayas. In the mid-autumn of 1869 he introduced the *La Leona* guitar to Tárrega. This guitar had robust resonance and a warm tone, which were the signatures of Antonio de Torres' work. It became Tárrega's favorite guitar for many years. Tárrega played it until 1897 and he used another Torres' guitar, *Almería*, until the end of his days.¹⁷

By the end of the 1870s, Tárrega was teaching the guitar and performing regular concerts. Because of his great performance, he was being acclaimed as 'the Sarasate of the guitar' by 1880.¹⁸ During the winter of 1880-81, Tárrega played a concert in Alicante, Spain.

¹⁵ Ibid., 22.

¹⁶ Ibid., 39.

¹⁷ Ibid., 32.

¹⁸ Graham Wade, *Traditions of the Classic Guitar* (London: John Calder Ltd., 1980), 143.

After the concert, an important man in town, don Vicente Rizo, asked Tárrega to listen to his daughter, María José Rizo, who was learning to play guitar; Tárrega fell in love with her. In 1881, Tárrega went to France, where his success continued. He played in several theaters and was even invited to play for the ex-Queen of Spain, Isabel II. He later continued his tour in London. He returned to Spain to get married to María José Rizo during the Christmas season of 1882.¹⁹

Tárrega and his wife moved to Madrid, earning their living by teaching privately and playing concerts. But after the death of an infant daughter, Maria Josefa, they settled permanently in Barcelona in 1885. They had three more children: Paquito, Maria Rosatia, and Concepción. This was Tárrega's mature period; he had frequent tours in different cities such as Perpignan (France), Cadiz (Spain), Nice (France), Mallorca (Spain), Paris (France), and Valencia (Spain), etc. To enlarge his guitar repertoire and also make use of his knowledge of keyboard music he transcribed numerous piano works by Beethoven, Chopin, Mendelssohn, and Albéniz. Many of his friends in Barcelona were pianists, composers, and musicians such as Enrique Granados (1867-1916), Joaquín Turina (1882-1949), Pablo Casals (1876-1973), and Joaquín Malats (1872-1912). Turina wrote pieces for the guitar and Malats' *Serenata Española* was successfully transcribed for the guitar by Tárrega.²⁰

In 1888, Tárrega had another concert tour in Andalusia. He expanded his relationship with students, such as Francisco Corell, Tónico Tello, and Pascual Roch (1860-1921). Roch was a concert artist and guitar builder. After Tárrega's death, he collected manuscripts of pieces and exercises by Tárrega, and wrote the three volumes of methods

¹⁹ Rius, 49.

²⁰ Ibid., 67.

named *The Modern Method for the Guitar—School of Tárrega*. With 395 pages of text in Spanish, French, and English, it was first published by the G. Schirmer Publishing House of New York (1921).²¹ Later in 1892, Tárrega met Miguel Llobet (1878-1938), who studied with him. Llobet became one of the greatest guitarists and composers during the first half of the twentieth century.²²

In 1896, on a concert tour in Valencia, Tárrega met a wealthy widow, Doña Concha Martínez, who became a valuable patron to him. She allowed Tárrega and his family to use her house in Barcelona where he wrote the bulk of his masterpieces. Later she took Tárrega to Granada, where he was impressed by the famed Moorish palace of the Alhambra. They visited the palace in late afternoon when it was growing dark and was full of shades of red, orange, and yellow. Tárrega composed the theme of his famous “Recuerdos de la Alhambra” on the same night. Tárrega later dedicated this piece to his friend Alfred Cottin, a Frenchman who had arranged his Paris concerts.²³

In 1900, Tárrega visited Algiers, where he heard an *ostinato* rhythm played by some traditional ethnic instruments accompanying a monotonous melody. The following morning he composed his famous “Danza Mora” based on that rhythm.²⁴ In 1901, Emilio Pujol (1886-1980) began his studies with Tárrega at the Conservatory of Barcelona. Later, Pujol wrote three books, *Guitar School Book One, Two, and Three*, which are theoretical and practical

²¹ Ibid., 76.

²² Allan Kozinn, Pete Welding, Dan Forte, and Gene Santoro. *The Guitar: the History, the Music, the Players* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1984), 33.

²³ Rius, 108.

²⁴ Ibid., 111.

methods for the guitar based on the principles of Tárrega. Around 1902, Tárrega started to cut his nails little by little until they almost disappeared behind his finger's skin. Playing without nails to produce sweet sounds became one of the characteristics of the School of Tárrega.²⁵

It is also important to know that the guitar had been viewed as an accompanying instrument for most people; therefore, transcribing familiar pieces from other instruments was a major way for Tárrega to make audiences realize the beautiful sound of the guitar. As mentioned above, Tárrega transcribed pieces from the piano when he was young; in his later years he even successfully transcribed works from opera such as *Marche Tanhäuser* by Wagner (dated 04-27-1903) and *Intermezzo from Carmen* by Bizet (dated 02-17-1904).²⁶ Even though Tárrega was regarded as a great guitar composer, the programs in his concerts still contained many of his transcriptions of other musicians' works. Actually, a mixture of transcriptions and works originally written for the guitar provided the central inspiration for the guitar for many decades. In particular, Tárrega advocated arranging works from the great composers: Bach, Handel, Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Paganini, and Schubert, as well as from a variety of Spanish composers: Albéniz, Arrieta, Chueca, Malats, and Valverde.²⁷

In January 1906, Tárrega was afflicted with paralysis on his right side, and though he would eventually return to the concert stage, he never completely recovered. In October 1908, he felt nostalgic and returned to Castellon. Then in 1909 he went to Novelda, Valencia,

²⁵ Ibid., 118.

²⁶ Ibid., 155.

²⁷ Wade, *A Concise History of the Classic Guitar*, 99.

Cullera, and Alcoi to play concerts. The long illness exhausted the family's funds, so his friends arranged and played a series of bimonthly concerts to raise funds for him. Tárrega finished his last work, "Oremus", on December 2, 1909. He died in Barcelona during the same year on December 15, at the age of 57.

As a composer, Tárrega wrote in the romantic style. His works vividly convey picturesque images and have certain Chopinesque features.²⁸ Although guitar music at the beginning of the twentieth century was still more romantic than contemporary, Tárrega influenced several guitar composers such as Agustin Barrios (1885-1944), Emilio Pujol (1886-1980), and Federico Moreno Torroba (1891-1982). His works allowed guitar music to continue developing until Andrés Segovia started the present revival of interest in the guitar.²⁹ As a performer, Tárrega was significant not only because he was successful but also because the Torres guitar was built about the same time. Since Torres established the general construction of the guitar, Tárrega was able to define more details about playing the guitar to today's standard. Through Tárrega's pupils' successful recitals and musicological activities, the guitar continued to be established on a firm footing even after his death. Tárrega has played a remarkable role for the guitar as an educator, performer, and composer.

²⁸ Ibid., 99.

²⁹ Turnbull, 107.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PRINCIPLES OF THE SCHOOL OF TÁRREGA

Since the School of Tárrega is closely associated with the Torres guitar, the Pujol and Roch books offer thorough details in regard to the construction of a string, how to choose the strings of the guitar, how to tune a guitar, an overview of the development of notation, and left- and right-hand positions. In order to discuss issues that are more closely associated with playing technique, the following section is organized to focus on sitting position, right-hand and left-hand positions, the quality of sound, and some suggestions regarding performance and practice, which are more related to the purpose of this study. Besides the information described in the Pujol and Roch books, modern technique will be discussed and compared at the end of each section. By comparing the differences between the principles of the School of Tárrega and modern technique, players will have a more complete concept about how to develop a correct and suitable playing technique.

Sitting Position

Tárrega provided guidelines on the sitting position based on the dimensions of the Torres new guitar. Before Tárrega, there was no standard method of holding a guitar. For example, the guitar can be supported on the left leg resting on a footstool, but the right leg

was also used, as demonstrated by Fernando Sor.³⁰ Another Spanish guitarist and composer Dionisio Aguado invented a “tripodion,” which is a device designed to hold the bottom part of the guitar. Finally, a common recommendation as set by the musicians of the School of Tárrega is that a guitarist should sit on a strong chair on which his body can achieve perfect stability. A guitar player should place the lower concave curve of the guitar on his left leg and gently rest the back of the guitar against his chest, leaning slightly forward and keeping the shoulders in a natural position. The left leg should rest on a small stool and should form an acute angle with the body. The foot stool should be 15 to 17 cm. high at the front (where the toe rests), and 12 to 14 cm. high at the back (where the heel rests). Pujol emphasizes that “these dimensions can be greater or smaller depending on the height of the chair and the stature of the performer.”³¹ Roch, in his book, offers more additional details: “the neck of the guitar should reach the height of the shoulder, and the twelfth fret should be in the vertical line with a player’s head.”³²

From the modern point of view, in the common playing position, a triangle is created with the guitar touching the body at three points: (1) at the lower part of the chest, (2) at the top of the left thigh, and (3) at the inner part of the right thigh.³³ A footstool is still very common, but a guitar support is widely used as well. A guitar support, without a footstool, can lift the guitar from the player’s knee while he or she can keep both feet firmly

³⁰ Turnbull, 102.

³¹ Emilio Pujol, *Guitar School—A Theoretical-Practical Method for the Guitar, Volume One* (Columbus, OH: Editions Orphee, Inc., 1983), 52.

³² Pascual Roch, *A Modern Method for the Guitar—School of Tárrega, Volume One* (New York, NY: G. Schirmer, Inc., 1917), 11.

³³ Scott Tennant, *Pumping Nylon—The Classical Guitarist’s Technique Handbook* (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing Co., Inc., 1995), 8.

on the ground. It does not matter whether a player is using a footstool or a guitar support, this ‘triangle position’ still corresponds with the general principles of the School of Tárrega.

Right-Hand Position

After establishing the proper sitting position, the next step is to learn the right-hand position. As with sitting position, the positions of the right hand also reveal no general agreement in the early nineteenth century.³⁴ The musicians of the School of Tárrega set some principles that have been somewhat modified by modern players.

According to Pujol, when one keeps the forearm supported, he abandons the right hand to its own weight and the wrist will be in an arched position. Moving the right hand towards the sound hole, the knuckles of the index, middle, annular, and little fingers should be parallel to the line of the string. The distance between wrist and the surface of the sound hole should be approximately 4 cm.³⁵ Roch has similar opinions. He suggests “the thumb-side is about an inch from the soundboard.”

From the modern point-of-view, many present guitarists have modified Tárrega’s position. Take the right-wrist for example: The School of Tárrega stated that the wrist should be in an arched position while some modern players think the wrist should be naturally straight. According to Scott Tennant, a contemporary guitarist, if players keep their wrists bent while making a fist, it is not completely comfortable. This discomfort happens because the tendons are not free inside the carpal tunnels. Therefore, it is more comfortable to keep the wrist relatively straight so that the fingers will work correctly and freely. There is

³⁴ Turnbull, 102.

³⁵ Pujol, *Volume One*, 55.

still no correct answer for players to straighten or just slightly bend their right-hand wrists. What is sure and needs to be considered is that “bending the wrist too far aggravates the tendons and could eventually cause irreparable damage.”³⁶

Another difference between the School of Tárrega and modern guitarists is that the former suggested that one should hold the fingers perpendicular to the strings while the latter will hold the fingers at a slight angle. As Pujol states in his book, if the knuckles of the fingers are parallel to the line of the string, it will result in a rightward twist of the wrist.³⁷ The advantage of this right-hand position is that players can maintain the same angle when striking strings, especially in scale passages. According to Hector Quine, however, this position will cause tension by stressing the tendons on the thumb side of the wrist. Moreover, with this position, it is the tip of the nail that attacks the string, which usually compromises the tonal quality.³⁸ On the other hand, modern guitarists usually hold the fingers at a slight angle to the string without a rightward twist of the wrist. This position keeps the tendons moving freely without unnecessary tension, and it “allows the guitarist to pluck the strings with the left side of his fingers, thus producing a better sound.”³⁹

Left-Hand Position

Many principles of the left-hand position in the School of Tárrega are similar to the modern position. First, both agree when holding the guitar, the left-hand thumb is straight and the tip-joint is against the neck of the guitar, somewhat below the middle of the curve

³⁶ Tennant, 6.

³⁷ Pujol, *Volume One*, 55.

³⁸ Hector Quine, *Guitar Technique—Intermediate to Advanced* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 15.

³⁹ Alexander Bellow, *The Illustrated History of the Guitar* (Rockville Centre, NY: F. Colombo Publications, 1970), 180.

of neck. The placement of the thumb is very important because some beginners will tend to embrace the neck of the guitar without placing their thumbs on the back side of the neck. This faulty position will cause uneven pressure and will also compromise smoothness when moving up or down. Roch points out that “it is an extremely bad habit.”⁴⁰ Second, the tip-joint of left-hand fingers should press on the strings vertically on their respective frets. Modern guitarists have more explanations about finger placement: Because of the variations in each finger, the first finger usually touches on the left side of its tip, and the fourth fingers usually touches on the right side of its tip.⁴¹ Although there are tiny differences among each finger, the basic rule remains the same in both the School of Tárrega and modern guitarists: Tip joints must stand as vertically as possible to the fingerboard.

The main difference between the schools is in the wrist. As mentioned earlier, the School of Tárrega recommends that players should hold the back of the hand curved then the wrist will bend naturally without constraint. On the other hand, modern players will keep the wrist straight rather than arched. The reason is the same as with the playing position of the right-hand wrist: to keep the tendons straight inside the carpal tunnels so that the fingers can move more freely without tension. There is no correct answer with this issue either, but it is necessary to bear in mind that “bending the wrist too much makes it a struggle to play.”⁴²

⁴⁰ Roch, *Volume One*, 12.

⁴¹ Tennant, 10.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 7.

Right-Hand Finger Movements

After discussing the sitting position and the right- and left-hand playing position, more details regarding finger movements should be stated. When plucking strings, according to Roch, the middle, index, and ring fingers should work in such a manner that only the tip-joint and middle-joint are moved. Pujol describes three phases of right-hand plucking: (1) placing the finger into contact with the designated string, (2) concentrating force into the fingertip and moving the string out of its position by a movement of the last joint towards the next adjacent string, (3) continuing the pressure until the string slides back and begins to vibrate.⁴³

Pujol's description is similar to the modern technique. Today, players explain the right-hand movement in three steps: (1) planting (preparation), (2) pressure, and (3) release. Planting involves preparing or placing a fingertip on a string accurately to make a stroke. Pressure means how much force to put on a string, which determines the loudness of a note. Release determines the sound; this movement means to free the finger when it is back in place for the next note. Overall, these three movements all take place in such a rapid succession that they blend together into one movement.⁴⁴

The movement of thumb needs to be discussed separately because the thumb moves the string toward the floor while other fingers move the string toward the body. According to Roch, "the right-hand thumb should pluck the string solely by the movement of its tip-

⁴³ Pujol, *Volume One*, 56.

⁴⁴ Tennant, 35.

joint, catching the string by the edge of the tip.”⁴⁵ However, for the modern technique, according to Quine, the thumb moves the string from the main joint with “the other two joints being kept straight.”⁴⁶ Tennant also advocates using the large joint instead of the tip joint in the thumb movement.⁴⁷

Left-Hand Finger Movements

The movements of left-hand fingers of guitarists involve horizontal and vertical motions to the strings. Because the left-hand fingers are frequently moving up and down on the neck of the guitar, the movements of left-hand fingers somehow are more complicated than those of the right hand. In the School of Tárrega, Pujol categorizes the horizontal movements of the left hand into four types: *substitution*, *skip*, *glissando*, and crossing fingers.

The first category is *substitution*, meaning “substitution of one finger for another, on the same string and at the same fret.”⁴⁸ In the first measure of Example 1, the A notes in the second half of the first beat and the first half of the second beat are substituted from first finger to second finger.

Example 1: *Substitution* of the Left-Hand Fingers



⁴⁵ Roch, *Volume One*, 15.

⁴⁶ Quine, 30.

⁴⁷ Tennant, 40.

⁴⁸ Emilio Pujol, *Guitar School—A Theoretical-Practical Method for the Guitar, Volume Three* (Columbus, OH: Editions Orphee, Inc., 1983), 6.

Sound Quality

The quality of sound involves many different elements. For example, each string can produce different sounds depending on the direction of a stroke, at which point it is struck, and how a player moves a string. In addition, the shape and length of the nail and how the tip and nail approach the string will also influence tone production. Actually, the use of nail had been argued from the eighteenth century to the early nineteenth century.⁵³ In the classical period, two distinguished guitarists, Fernando Sor (1778-1839) and Dionisio Aguado (1784-1849), had different opinions regarding fingernails. Sor preferred to play with the flesh. On the other hand, Aguado played with nails on the index, middle, and annular fingers but used flesh on the thumb. It is essential that every classical guitarist produces great tone.

Since there are both advantages and disadvantages to playing with or without fingernails, the School of Tárrega compares the differences between these two types of playing. In his book, Pujol mentions that the fingernail is hard, so it produces a brilliant, quick and a rather metallic sound. On the other hand, when playing without nails, the string is struck by a smooth and subtle object, which gives a sound of greater softness and fullness.⁵⁴ Fingernails are capable of bringing out greater contrast and gain brilliance and strength while fingers can create sweetness and fullness.

Although there are different perspectives in regard to playing with or without nails, Pujol thought it was preferable for beginners to play without nails rather than with nails. This is because the portion of the flesh that contacts a string is larger than the contact point

⁵³ James Tyler and Paul Sparks, *The Guitar and Its Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 261.

⁵⁴ Pujol, *Volume One*, 50.

of the nail. The flesh then produces more resistance. Therefore, for a beginner, “it will be easier to move from a form of playing which offers some resistance to another which offers less than the other way round.”⁵⁵ Interestingly, Roch did not offer any opinion regarding using nails or not, but he begged students to “give [the] striking string careful attention to ensure the greatest accuracy and purity of tone.”⁵⁶ For the School of Tárrega, one of the main characteristics is to pursue an excellent quality of sound. Eventually, a player should go through a stage of trying, listening, and deciding his favorite sound.

For the modern technique, one of the most important guitarists in the twentieth century, Andrés Segovia, established a nail-flesh combination that is commonly used today. In this type of playing, when the fingers are initially placed on the strings, only the flesh makes contact, and then the nail moves the string to make a strike. Consequently, the shape and finish of the fingernails largely determine tone quality in the attack; when the nail is properly shaped, the tone will be splendid.⁵⁷

To further enhance tone quality, another modern guitarist, Quine, highly recommends a great deal of practicing of the rest stroke prior to the free stroke. He feels the rest stroke provides vital training for a positive attack by the fingers and establishes habits that will still produce a firm tone when playing free stroke.⁵⁸ This suggestion is similar to Pujol’s recommendation to practice with flesh rather than with nail only because a rest stroke creates more resistance than the free stroke just like the flesh creates more resistance

⁵⁵ Pujol, *Volume One*, 51.

⁵⁶ Roch, *Volume One*, 17.

⁵⁷ Charles Duncan, *The Art of Classical Guitar Playing* (Miami, FL: Summy-Birchard Inc., 1980), 51.

⁵⁸ Quine, 27.

than the nail. Although the School of Tárrega did not discuss the nail issue as much as modern guitarists do, many of its principles remain useful and practical.

Instructions for Study and Performance

In the process of studying classical guitar, one of the difficulties is to find a proper fingering because the same note can be played in a variety of different places. For example, a written middle C can be played on the third fret of the fifth string; it can also be sounded on the eighth fret of the sixth string. In addition, not all hands are of the same size, strength, or skill. All these factors will make the fingering arrangements quite different. Although there are many varieties among players, the School of Tárrega offers some guidance when choosing fingerings. According to Pujol, “one should be guided by an attitude which adapts itself to the natural action and position of fingers and respecting the musical requirements of each passage.”⁵⁹ Players should try to avoid awkward leaps between fingers and seek to eliminate all unnecessary effort. Roch does not focus on natural playing, but he mentions the importance of slow and daily practice.

Natural playing becomes increasingly important for the modern musicians. The Alexander Technique shows the importance of natural playing and being relaxed. The main purpose of this technique is to change habits and attitudes, which releases the body and mind, enhances body awareness and functioning, and gives the body new freedom, coordination, and energy. Related to natural playing, a recent book called *The Natural Classical Guitar* (1991) by Lee F. Ryan is also popular and useful among guitarists because effortless playing is such a natural approach and will improve one’s playing. A few quotes from the

⁵⁹ Pujol, *Volume One*, 48.

modern guitarist Christopher Berg may be helpful for the inspiration of natural and effective guitar playing: “to understand movement, we must feel, not strain,” “effective action improves the body and its capacity to act,” and “observation of the self is better than mechanical repetition.”⁶⁰

In summary, the School of Tárrega offers a detailed discussion about how holding a guitar and sitting position, as well as the right- and left- hand positions should be achieved. The modern playing position, using a footstool, was set by Tárrega. Other movements of the left- and right-hand fingers such as *substitution*, *skip*, *glissando*, and crossing fingers are still the foundation of the modern technique.

During training for finger mobility, slow, daily, effortless, and natural practice are required. In addition, great tone quality is always the main goal of the School of Tárrega. For the beginner, practicing without nails comes before practicing with nails. As emphasized before, there is no right or wrong approach regarding the use of nails or not, or which stroke (free/rest) is better. All these issues will be different depending on the individual. What players need to do is understand the advantages and disadvantages of nail and stroke issues and then spend time practicing and finding their favorite sounds and interpretations.

Through comparing the School of Tárrega with modern technique, most of Tárrega’s concepts are still extremely valuable nowadays but some, such as the angle of the right hand and the wrist, are not. The School of Tárrega keeps the right-hand fingers parallel to the string with a rightward twist of the wrist. Modern technique, on the other hand, recommends the right-hand fingers to contact the string at a slight angle but with a straight

⁶⁰ Christopher Berg, *Mastering Guitar Technique: Process & Essence* (Pacific, MO: Mel Bay Publications, Inc., 1997), 20.

wrist. In addition, the School of Tárrega prefers to hold both the right and left wrists arched while modern guitarists will keep both wrists straight to avoid extra stress. Actually, there are still a few modern guitarists who will keep their right-hand fingers perpendicular to the strings when playing scale passages. It is believed that keeping the wrist too arched can make it difficult to play and may cause physical damage.

CHAPTER FOUR

TÁRREGA'S THIRTY ELEMENTARY LEVEL STUDIES AND TWENTY-FIVE INTERMEDIATE AND ADVANCED LEVEL STUDIES

Tárrega's fifty-five studies will be discussed in groups so that the purpose of each study is clearly set forth and the difficulty of practicing is properly resolved. These groups are organized in the order of scale playing, arpeggio playing, blocked chords, barré technique and slur playing. Some discussions will be offered in regard to right- and left-hand issues. It is important to understand that although the Tárrega studies appear prior to the Pujol and Roch methods historically, Tárrega had few descriptions in his studies while Pujol and Roch had more explanations regarding how to practice, based on their learning experiences from Tárrega. It will be easier to comprehend the School of Tárrega by reviewing musical examples taken from the Pujol and Roch books first and then applying the Pujol and Roch principles to the Tárrega studies.

In addition, some modern playing principles will be discussed following each section. There are many famous guitarists and educators who have published books and methods that are influential; the selected ones in this study include Christopher Berg, Charles Duncan, Richard Provost, Hector Quine, Aaron Shearer, Scott Tennant, and Christopher Parkening. By comparing the advantages and disadvantage between the School of Tárrega and the

The third section regarding scale playing offers more fingering exercises in order to improve the independence, security, and agility of the left-hand fingers. These exercises include various combinations of left-hand fingerings such as 2-3, 1-2-4, 1-3-4, 1-2-3-4, etc.

The fourth section deals with chromatic scales. It demands that all four left-hand fingers remain on the strings when ascending and lift successively when descending, without moving away too much from the string. In addition, Pujol reminds performers that when playing on the first and second string, the “wrist does not move back towards the body so that the curve of fingers is as accentuated perpendicular as possible.”⁶² Keeping the left-hand fingers curved is more important in the chromatic scale; otherwise, a faulty position will affect the sound quality.

Roch’s approach is similar to Pujol’s. For example, he also mentions that it is a rule to keep the fingers down until the string is changed when playing all scales and similar passages.⁶³ The main difference between Roch and Pujol is that Roch focuses on shifting when playing scales. Pujol limits scale playing within the first position. Whenever a shift happens, it should “glide easily over the fingerboard with a movement of the wrist only.”⁶⁴ Interestingly, modern guitar technique reveals different points of view.

According to Charles Duncan, who uses the modern approach, all shifts are based on either or both of two types of upper-arm movement: (1) the adduction and abduction of the upper arm, and (2) the rotation of the upper arm. Whether ascending or descending, an

⁶² Pujol, *Volume Two*, 123.

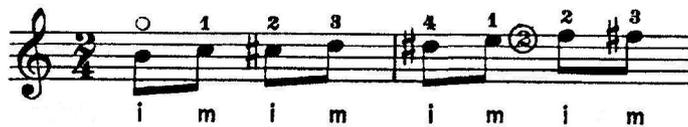
⁶³ Roch, *Volume One*, 63.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 30.

effective and effortless shifting occurs when the elbow leads the hand.⁶⁵ Another current guitarist, Richard Provost, has the same opinion. He thinks the shift is achieved by “releasing the tension in the shoulder and feeling the weight of the arm.” Although a descending shift (moving toward the head of the guitar) is a bit more difficult to feel since players are working against gravity, all the shifts are led with the elbow.⁶⁶

Although Roch’s idea regarding shifting (wrist leads the fingers) is somehow different from modern playing technique (elbow leads the hand), most of his finger exercises are still very valuable and well organized. For example, he arranges several shifts between left-hand fingers, such as 2-1, 3-1, 4-1, 3-2, 4-3, 1-2, etc., and these are not uncommon fingerings in modern guitar music. Example 8 shows a shift that happens in the first two eighth-notes of the second measure (D-sharp to E) with a 4-1 fingering.

Example 8: Roch Exercise—Shifting



It is interesting to compare the organization of the Roch and Pujol books. Pujol arranges scales in the order of the circle of fifths, which is common when learning tonal music. On the other hand, Roch arranges both major and minor scales chromatically. According to Roch, the advantage of practicing this way is to “allow a player to be

⁶⁵ Duncan, 21.

⁶⁶ Richard Provost, *Classic Guitar Technique—Volume One: Scale Source Book* (Bloomfield, CT: Professional Guitar Publications, 1983), 19.

thoroughly familiar with the fingerboard.”⁶⁷ Although this arrangement seems more difficult in the learning of tonal music, the fingering for a multi-sharp or flat key major scale could be the same as a C-major scale. This situation happens when there are no open strings used so that the same left-hand fingering patterns could be applied to different keys. This is called a movable scale.

Right-Hand Issues

According to Pujol, there are four right-hand fingerings that could be used when practicing scales: *i-m*, *m-i*, *m-a*, and *a-m*.⁶⁸ Repeated fingerings such as *i-i*, *m-m*, or *a-a* are considered bad fingerings since the alternation between right-hand fingers allows a player to sound notes in rapid succession. Although alternation is required when playing scale passages, awkward string crossing sometimes occurs while moving to different strings.

Roch has a similar observation. He mentions that in passing from one string to another, and in particular when going down, one is likely to fall into the habit of repeating the finger which plucks the last note on the higher string.

Therefore, there are two considerations regarding right-hand fingering in playing scale passages. The first consideration is to learn and get used to the distance between strings. Both Pujol and Roth designed several mechanical exercises. In Example 9, when playing an *m-i* fingering, the last eighth-note (F) in the first measure is on the first string and the first eighth-note (D) in the second measure is on the second string; this is designed for practicing an unnatural string crossing. The *a-m* fingering serves the same purpose.

⁶⁷ Roch, *Volume One*, 62.

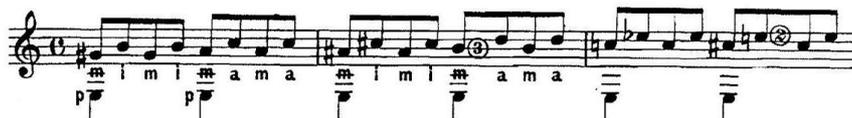
⁶⁸ Pujol, *Volume Two*, 114.

Example 9: Pujol Exercise—String Crossing



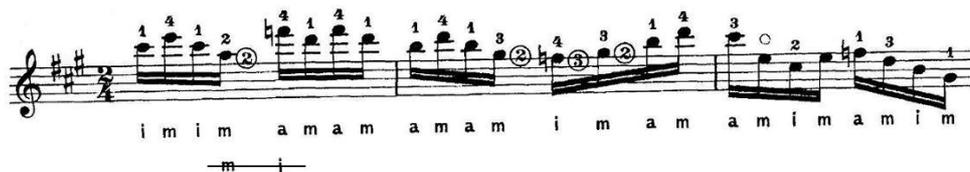
Example 10 is written for practicing awkward string crossing as well. In the first measure, the G-sharp is on the third string and the following B is on the second string. The common right-hand fingering should be *i-m*, but Roch marks *m-i* instead.

Example 10: Roch Exercise—String Crossing



Therefore, one solution for resolving an awkward string crossing is more practice. Another solution is to use the *a* finger. Example 11 demonstrates this concept. In the first measure, if a player keeps the *i-m* alternation, the fourth sixteenth-note (A) in the first beat and the first sixteenth-note (F) in second beat will be fingered *m-i*. Because the A is on the second string and the following F is on the first string, this *m-i* fingering is considered an awkward string crossing. Therefore, a player can easily avoid this awkward string crossing by using the *a* finger for the first sixteenth-note (F) in the second beat.

Example 11: Roch Exercise—Use Ring Finger to Avoid Awkward String Crossing



Scale Playing in Tárrega's Elementary and Advanced Studies

Left-Hand Issues

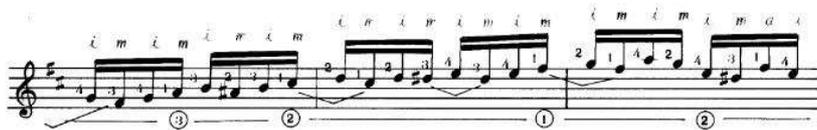
After reviewing the principles of Pujol and Roch, the next topic is Tárrega's actual studies: the elementary studies no. 11 (Example 12) and 13 (Example 13). There are some original markings that indicate not to lift left-hand fingers until necessary. Example 12, based on Pujol's and Roch's ideas, emphasizes that when playing the second eighth-note, E, in m. 1, since the following D-sharp is on the same string (second), a player should press D-sharp and E at the same time. Meanwhile, the D-sharp appears again in the third beat in the same measure so the third finger remains without lifting right away.

In Example 13, similarly, whenever a curved line is indicated, a player should hold the note as written in order to minimize the movement of the left-hand finger.

Example 12: Tárrega's Elementary Studies, No. 11, mm.1-2



Example 13: Tárrega's Elementary Studies, No. 13, mm.4-6



Right-Hand Issues

The following musical examples are taken from Tárrega's elementary studies no. 1, 7, 10, 11, 13, 15, 18 and 20 and advanced studies no. 1, 5, and 21. In Example 14, the suggested right-hand fingering is the alternation between *i-m*. As in Example 11, the *a* is used in the third beat of the first measure to avoid the awkward string crossing.

Example 14: Tárrega's Elementary Studies, No. 1, mm. 1-2



In Example 15, elementary study no. 7, although the rhythmic figures are all in triplets, alternations between *i-m* and *i-a* are still the preferred fingerings.

Example 15: Tárrega's Elementary Studies, No. 7, mm.1-2

Besides the alternation between two fingers, elementary studies no. 13, 18 and 20 show Tárrega's idea of alternating between three fingers. The alternation between *m-a* is less natural because the *a* finger naturally tends to move with the *m* finger.⁶⁹ Therefore, in Example 16, Tárrega offers two possible fingerings: the first one is *i-a* and the second one is

⁶⁹ Aaron Shearer, *Learning the Classic Guitar—Part 1* (Pacific, MO: Mel Bay Publications, Inc., 1990), 61.

i-m-a. The *i-m-a* fingering is perfect here because there are descending sequences from measures 4 to 10. Notice that the marked sequences, which start from the second sixteenth-note in measure 2 of this example, consist of groups of three. It appears that the first note is always on the lower string while the second and third notes are on the higher string in the three-note sequences. The *i-m-a* fingering not only fits the idea of the group of three but also avoids awkward string crossing.

Example 16: Tárrega's Elementary Studies, No. 18, mm.3-11

Example 17, elementary study no. 20, is more complicated regarding right-hand fingering. Similar to the previous example, Tárrega offers two types of right-hand fingerings. The first type is the alternation between *i-a* through the whole piece. The second type of right-hand fingering involves different fingering combinations such as *i-m*, *m-a*, *i-m-a*, etc. Unlike a previous example (16), Example 17 does not allow the *i-m-a* fingering pattern since awkward string crossings will frequently appear. However, the second type of right-hand

unavoidable string crossing, as mentioned before in Examples 10 and 11, practicing more mechanical exercises will decrease the difficulty of string crossings.

On the other hand, for advanced students, it may be faster and more secure to play scale passages by adding the *a* finger to avoid awkward string crossings. It is suggested, therefore, to practice this advanced study no. 1 with two different fingerings: Tárrega's *i-m* fingerings will develop the security and evenness of scale playing, while occasionally using the *a* finger of the right hand will ensure a more natural fingering arrangement. An alternative fingering for part of Tárrega's advanced study no. 1 is offered in Example 18. There are still other possible fingerings for this study, too. As long as the right-hand fingerings for descending string crossings are *a-m*, *a-i*, or *m-i* and fingerings for ascending string crossings are *i-m*, *i-a*, or *m-a*, theoretically, they are all qualified as natural fingering arrangements. Both the descending and ascending string crossings are marked with brackets in Example 18.

Example 18: Tárrega's Advanced Studies, No. 1, mm.1-15

S.E.M.
N.º 1

m i m i m i m i m i m a m a i a c.2 m i m i m i m i

m i m i m i m i (etc.) m i m i m i m i m i m a m a i a

m i m i m i m i m i m i m i m i m i m i m i m a m a i a

c.2 m i m i m i m i m i m i m i m i m a m i

m i m i m i m i a m i m i m i m i m i m i m

i m i m a i a m m a m i m a i m c.4 i m i m i m i m

In summary, one of the most important principles for practicing scale passages is to minimize the left hand's movements. Preparing more notes at the same time or holding returning notes for a longer value are two ways to achieve this goal. The right-hand fingering arrangement is also critical. An alternation among fingers is necessary; a beginner may use the *i-m* or *m-i* fingering patterns while advanced students may add the *a* finger to avoid awkward string crossing for more natural scale playing.

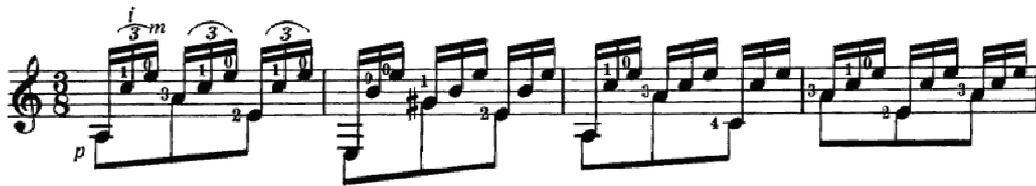
In order to guide guitar students to a more organized and effective way to overcome difficulties, those who want to focus on scale playing may study Tárrega's elementary studies no. 1, 7, 10, 11, 13, 18, 20, 21, and 30 as well as advanced studies no. 1, 5, and 21.

Arpeggio Playing Based on the Pujol and Roch Books

Left-Hand Issues

An arpeggio, according to Pujol, is considered as though it were a horizontal chord: instead of playing notes by means of a simultaneous motion of the right-hand fingers, they are played one after the other successively. Therefore, the left-hand fingers should be placed simultaneously in position as if for a chord.⁷⁰ In Example 19, in the first measure, the left-hand fingers should play C with the first finger, A with the third finger, and E with the second finger at the same time.

Example 19: Pujol Exercise—Hold More Notes at Once



Roch has a similar suggestion. Using guide fingers or pivot fingers, if applicable, is necessary for the continuity of a piece. There is a practical tip suggested by Pujol. Pujol thinks that it is best to learn the position of each arpeggio in advance, as though each one were a chord; then, when the left hand has become accustomed to the positions and to the changes from one to another, the right-hand arpeggio pattern should be applied to them.⁷¹

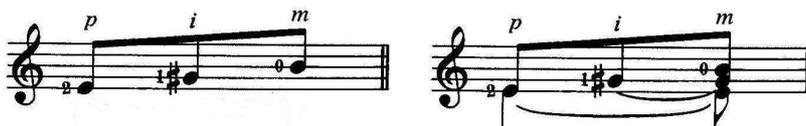
⁷⁰ Pujol, *Volume Two*, 109.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 148.

Right-Hand Issues

Regarding the right-hand fingers, Roch mentions that the *i*, *m*, and *a* fingers should be held quite close together and kept as close to the strings as possible. Pujol, more thoroughly, discusses arpeggio playing in two sections: the first one is the ascending arpeggio and the second one is the descending arpeggio. Let us discuss the ascending arpeggio first. The common fingering to play a three-note ascending arpeggio is *p-i-m*. When playing an ascending arpeggio, the fingers are not coming to rest on the adjacent string, which is called a free stroke in the modern technique. Because free stroke playing will not stop other strings, meaning the strings will keep vibrating, the notes are prolonged and the sound will sustain longer than written. Example 20 shows the E-major chord in arpeggio. Although all the three notes (E, G-sharp, B) are written in eighth-notes, the E will sound like a quarter and an eighth-note in value, and the G-sharp will sound like a quarter-note.

Example 20: An E-Major Arpeggio on the Guitar



Interestingly, according to Pujol, the right-hand finger action will be slightly different when playing a descending arpeggio. Instead of playing a free stroke (playing the note without resting on an adjacent string), Pujol suggests playing a rest stroke with the note on the highest string. Take Example 21 for instance. In the first measure, the E is on the first string and the C is on the second string. Pujol suggests playing the open string E with a rest stroke and the following C with a free stroke. In his opinion, when a piece is in a slow tempo,

and as long as a rest stroke will not affect the sound of an arpeggio, a rest stroke is better than a free stroke “because resting on the next string is more comfortable and could be more secure for the fingers.”⁷²

Example 21: Pujol Exercise—Rest Stroke on the highest Note E



Actually, Roch also makes a similar statement regarding the *a* finger. In most cases, the *a* finger is required to pluck the highest note in an arpeggio. Roch says accenting the highest notes is a way to show “expression,” as it usually brings out the melody.⁷³ He does not say which stroke (free or rest), but usually a rest stroke can play louder than a free stroke.

However, in the modern approach, players will play both ascending and descending arpeggios with a free stroke. In his book, Tennant quotes some arpeggio exercises from Tárrega’s *The Complete Technical Studies* and indicates to “use free stroke with a full sound.”⁷⁴ The current guitarist Richard Provost also thinks the arpeggio should be played with a free stroke, and he divides arpeggio playing into two sections. The first movement is to prepare a stroke, which means to put fingers on the required strings. The second movement is to pluck the strings and “follow-through.” A follow-through is to push the string toward the heel of the hand. This movement is “the same as a rest stroke except to miss the next

⁷² Pujol, *Volume Two*, 111.

⁷³ Roch, *Volume One*, 56.

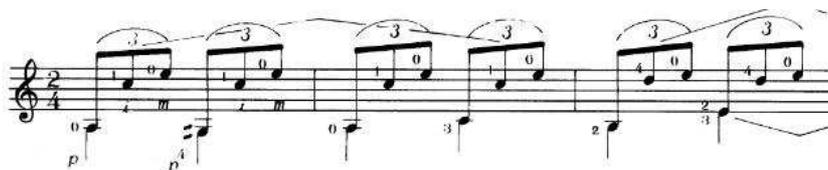
⁷⁴ Tennant, 38.

string.”⁷⁵ Therefore, comparing the School of Tárrega and the modern technique, the former may advocate using a rest stroke on the highest note or in descending arpeggio, as long as it will not compromise the sonority; the latter will still try to create a full sound by using a free stroke. Using a rest stroke can secure the right-hand’s playing and create a more expressive interpretation, but it will compromise the speed. Using a free stroke can help play fast and keep the harmony ringing, but it demands practice to create a free stroke note sounded as solid as a rest stroke note.

Arpeggio Playing in Tárrega’s Elementary and Advanced Studies

Tárrega’s elementary studies no. 2, 4, 8, and 24 and advanced studies no. 10 and 16 are associated with arpeggio playing. Example 22 is one of the most common formulas of arpeggio playing: *p-i-m*. In this study, since the *i* finger of the right hand always plays on the second string while the *m* finger always plays on the first string, the only concern will be the placement of the right-hand thumb. The base line needs to be isolated for practice in the beginning until the thumb can move to a different string without any difficulty.

Example 22: Tárrega’s Elementary Studies, No. 2, mm.1-3



Example 23 shows another common type of arpeggio playing: *p-i-m-a*. Compared to Example 22, Example 23 will be more difficult because the *i* finger plays on the fourth string

⁷⁵ Richard Provost, *Classic Guitar Technique—Volume Two: Arpeggio Source Book* (Bloomfield, CT: Professional Guitar Publications, 1985), 4.

while the *m* finger plays on the second string. The purpose of this study is to expand the distance between the *i* and *m* fingers of the right hand.

Example 23: Tárrega's Elementary Studies, No. 4, mm.1-3

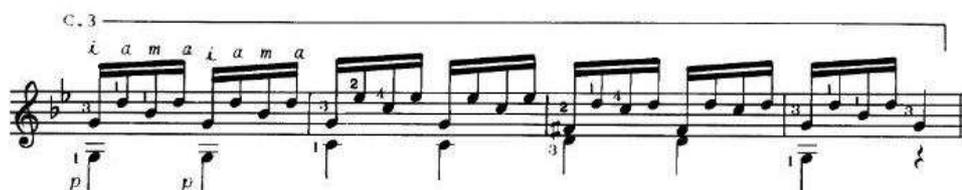


Examples 24a and 24b are taken from Tárrega's elementary study no. 8. This piece requires players to practice the arpeggio when the *p* and *i* fingers play simultaneously. Tárrega arranges two different right-hand fingerings for practicing arpeggios: *i-m-a* and *i-a-m-a*, and they are both common and useful in guitar playing. Example 25 is also written for the same purpose of *i-m-a* arpeggios.

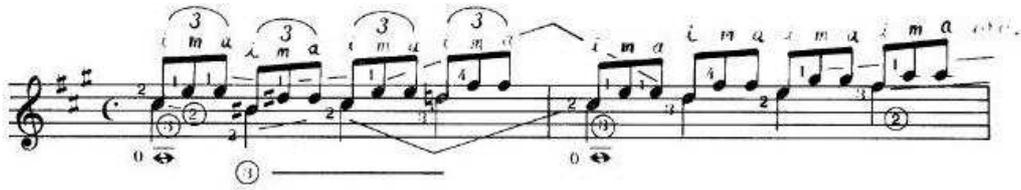
Example 24a: Tárrega's Elementary Studies, No. 8, mm.1-4



Example 24b: Tárrega's Elementary Studies, No. 8, mm.13-16



Example 25: Tárrega's Elementary Studies, No. 24, mm. 1-2



In Example 26, the purpose is to practice the arpeggio with the *p* and *a* fingers playing simultaneously. Before discussing this example, it is necessary to state the sequential planting technique first. Sequential planting is critical in the arpeggio playing of the modern technique. This approach is based on basic principles of physiology and can develop a solid technique.⁷⁶ Unfortunately, it seems that the School of Tárrega did not develop the concept of sequencing at its time; neither Pujol nor Roch had further discussion about this concept.

Sequential planting is preparing fingers on the strings to facilitate the playing of arpeggios.⁷⁷ The basic concept of sequential planting is to play a note and prepare the following note at the same time. The right-hand movement is a routine. For example, in a *p-i* fingering pattern, the finger preparation should be: as *p* plays, *m* plants; as *m* plays, *i* plants; as *i* plays, *p* plants; as *p* plays, *m* plants, etc.

Sequential planting is also effective in solving a natural restriction: the independent movement of the middle and ring fingers. Since there is only a single extensor muscle in the middle and ring fingers, the movement of the *a* finger is limited. The tension will be minimized when grouping the *m* and *a* fingers in an arpeggio.⁷⁸ In other words, when an

⁷⁶ Provost, *Volume Two*, 16.

⁷⁷ Tennant, 78.

⁷⁸ Provost, *Volume Two*, 17.

arpeggio is involved with the *a* finger of the right hand, sequential planting must be modified somehow.

Tárrega's advanced study no. 10 (Example 26) is a good example of a modified sequential planting. In Example 26, the right-hand fingering is in a pattern of *a-i-m*. Theoretically, the sequential planting of this piece should be: "as *a* plays, *i* plants; as *i* plays, *m* plants; as *m* plays, *a* plants." There will be a problem, however, in the movement "as *m* plays, *a* plants." As mentioned before, the *a* finger naturally tends to move with the *m* finger;⁷⁹ therefore, in this study, a modified sequential planting should be applied as follows: as *i* plays, *m* and *a* plant simultaneously. When this sequential planting is used in measure 1, after playing the first note on the fourth beat (B) with the *a* finger on the first string, the *a* finger should return to the first string exactly when the next note (G-sharp) is played by the *i* finger; this returning movement of the *a* finger should not happen when the *m* finger plays the last note (E) in the first measure. Although this is a very tiny change of the right-hand's movement, it will greatly improve the flow of arpeggio playing.

Example 26: Tárrega's Advanced Studies, No. 10, mm. 1-2

⁷⁹ Shearer, *Part 1*, 61.

In summary, one similarity between the School of Tárrega and modern technique is the necessity of preparing the left hand. For a guitarist, playing an arpeggio is like playing a blocked chord; it is critical to place every note of an arpeggio at the same time if applicable. This principle can minimize left-hand movements, which is both important in scale and arpeggio playing. The main difference is deciding which stroke should be applied on the right hand. For the School of Tárrega, it is suggested to use a rest stroke on the highest notes in a descending arpeggio while modern guitarists will use a free stroke both in descending and ascending arpeggios. In addition, the School of Tárrega does not focus on the preparation of the right hand while modern guitarists will use sequential planting to facilitate arpeggio playing. Sometimes it is necessary to modify sequential planting to fit the natural movement of the right-hand because *m* and *a* have the tendency to move together.

Blocked Chord Playing Based on the Pujol and Roch Books

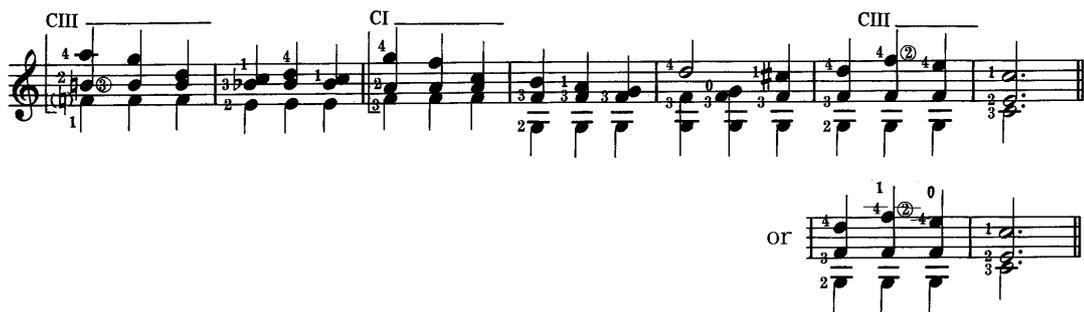
Left-Hand Issues

Although a chord should contain at least three notes, theoretically, for Pujol and Roch, it is necessary to first study a two-note chord in order to play a solid blocked chord. In his book, Pujol designs exercises for two- and three- note chords. The main principle for the left hand is to “place the fingers all at once and as close as possible to the frets.”⁸⁰ In Example 27a, the first half of the second measure (E and G-sharp) is usually fingered with 1 and 2 instead of 1 and 3. The reason to change the left-hand fingering is to allow the third finger to be held for the following double-stop (B and E) in the same measure.

Example 27a: Pujol Exercise for Two-Note Chords



Example 27b: Pujol Exercise for Three-Note Chords



⁸⁰ Pujol, *Book 2*, 108.

Pujol also reminds the players to take advantage of using guide fingers for changing chords smoothly. In the last two measures of Example 27b after the fourth finger plays the D at the third fret on the second string, it slides along the string to play the next note (F) of the second chord at the sixth fret and the next note (E) at the fifth fret on the same second string. This example shows the importance of the usage of a guide finger which improves tone quality. The second to last measure could also be fingered in first position instead of third position. When this measure is fingered in first position, the highest note of the last chord will be the first open-string E; when the same measure is fingered in third position, that E note will be played at the fifth fret on the second string. In the School of Tárrega, the quality of sound has been one of the focuses, and the open-string E sounds brighter than the second-string E. Moreover, since the melody is in the treble part, the melodic line will sound more equal in terms of tone quality when these melodic notes are fingered on the same string, which is the second string in this example. This example shows that the School of Tárrega focuses on not only developing a solid technique but also a delicate interpretation. In his book, Roch also designs the blocked chord from two-note and then three- and four-note groups. The guide fingers are also mentioned.

The modern technique explains more details about chord changing in regard to the left hand. Similar to Pujol, Quine agrees that “a guide finger or fingers will help to stabilize the hand as well as making the change more legato.”⁸¹ Besides this idea, Quine also offers another way to make the chord-changing easier. A general rule which has been accepted for many years states that the hand must be kept as parallel to the edge of the fingerboard as

⁸¹ Quine, 57.

possible. However, sometimes this principle will be hard to follow if a chord change is as difficult as Example 28.

Example 28: A Difficult Chord Change



In Example 28, the second D-major chord is perfect for the left hand to hold parallel to the fingerboard because each finger presses on one fret (low D at fifth fret; F-sharp at fourth fret; A at second fret, and high D at third fret). The first chord is hardly easy for the left hand to play parallel to the fingerboard because the E-flat and C both press on the first fret (different string). When playing these two chords, “an adjustment of the arm-to-fingerboard angles is necessary.”⁸² Applying this principle to this chord change, the left-hand movement will be executed as follows: when playing the first chord, the back of the hand will be brought to an angle of about forty-five degrees toward the head of the guitar and then a pure arm movement without wrist distortion will help transition to the next D-major chord. In general, comparing the School of Tárrega and to the modern technique, both Pujol and Roch focus on keeping the left hand as parallel as possible, but they do not tell us how to solve some chord changes when it is naturally impossible to keep the left hand parallel to the fingerboard. Pujol even mentions that moving the fingers when changing position “should not be allowed to affect the position of the hand or of the arm.”⁸³ Actually, by

⁸² Quine, 58.

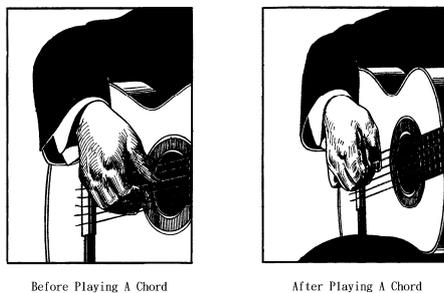
⁸³ Pujol, *Volume Two*, 89.

slightly changing the position of the left-hand and taking advantage of a pure arm movement, some difficult chord changes become more natural.

Right-Hand Issues

In the Pujol book, the very first task is to make sure all the notes are sounded perfectly and simultaneously. As Pujol suggests, a blocked chord should be played with a free stroke; otherwise, “if a player touches a string which ought to be vibrating, its harmonic effect will be cancelled.”⁸⁴ Pujol also reminds us that the right-hand fingers should be placed near the strings and the end joints should be bent toward the interior of the hand. Example 29 shows the position of the right-hand fingers before and after playing a blocked chord.

Example 29: Pujol–Right-Hand Position Before and After Playing A Chord



The point-of-view of the modern technique needs further explanation. First, although both Roch and Pujol demand quality sound, modern players will not intentionally bend the end joint (tip joint) toward the inside of the hand to acquire a better sound. What should be used to create an attractive sound is the knuckle joint. Among tip, middle, and

⁸⁴ Pujol, *Volume Two*, 100.

knuckle joints, the strongest joint is the knuckle joint. The movement for the right hand to play blocked chords is similar to making a fist or gripping something. To grip something with the tip joint is weak, so playing blocked chords should not involve the tip joint only. Besides, since the tip joint is not the main resource for playing blocked chords, it should remain as free from tension as possible.⁸⁵ Example 29 seems to lead to misunderstandings that one should play blocked chords with the tip joint and then curve the fingers after playing; from the modern approach, what should be used is the knuckle joint and when finishing a chord, the right-hand should relax right away.

After clarifying the right-hand movement, another consideration is the fingerings. There are several ways to play blocked chords according to every player's unique interpretation. This situation will be different when a blocked chord contains more than four notes. In general, a four-note chord should be played with the thumb, index, middle, and ring fingers (*p-i-m-a*) together. When a blocked chord contains more than four notes, the thumb will usually play the bottom two or three strings at the same time and the *i-m-a* will play the higher strings. If a player would like to create a sound that has a harp-like effect, the *p*, *i*, or *m* finger could strike the consecutive strings from the lower string to the higher string or vice versa. Sometimes a melody will appear in the top, middle, or bottom part of a series of blocked chords; it is important to build the technique to bring out the melodic part when necessary. Example 30 shows the notation of a harp-like blocked chord and its right-hand fingering.⁸⁶ In general, like Pujol and Roch suggest, the strings of a blocked chord should be

⁸⁵ Quine, 17.

⁸⁶ Pascual Roch, *A Modern Method for the Guitar—School of Tárrega, Volume Two* (New York, NY: G. Schirmer, Inc., 1917), 80.

basically sounded simultaneously. A harp- or arpeggio-like chord will be played when a composer notates on his music or when a player wants to emphasize a chord according to his own interpretation.

Example 30: Roch Exercise–Notation and the Right-Hand Fingering of Blocked Chords



Blocked Chords Playing in Tárrega’s Elementary and Advanced Studies

Since blocked chords usually contain at least three notes, if applicable, the guide finger and pivot finger will be used to lessen the difficulty of the movement of the left hand. The pivot fingers are marked in Example 31.

Example 31: Tárrega’s Elementary Studies, No. 3, mm. 10-17



When playing a passage of blocked chords, it might be more difficult to play the music smoothly and connectedly because of the busy movements of the left hand. According to Pujol, “the left hand is able to contribute to the prolongation of the sounds of

one or more notes and give them greater intensity by means of vibrato.⁸⁷ A vibrato is created when a note or notes is/are positioned at a given fret and the finger(s) make(s) a motion from left to right without diminishing the pressure. Since the open-string notes cannot produce the vibrato effect, in Tárrega's music, some notes are fingered with another position so a player could use vibrato on those notes belonging to lyrical melodies. In Example 32, the melody belongs to the highest notes among the blocked chords so that players need more attention on those notes. From mm. 2 to 3, the melodic line goes from E to F: the E is fingered with third finger on the second string, instead of the first open-string E, and the F is fingered with the second finger on the second string, instead of the first finger on the first string. It is believed that this fingering arrangement is made for the purpose of improving the continuity of melody. In addition, the tempo of this study is Lento, which is very slow; the sound of the guitar disappears relatively quickly and a vibrato can definitely prolong the value of a note.

Example 32: Tárrega's Elementary Studies, No. 26, mm. 1-9

⁸⁷ Pujol, *Volume Three*, 114.

Example 33 shows another example of Tárrega's preference of using fretted notes instead of open string notes on block chords. The two chords in the first measure are fingered in the fifth position (C. 5). Actually, these two chords can also be played in first position (C. 1) which may be easier and closer for playing the following measure (the distance between the C. 5 to C. 2 is greater than the distance between C.1 to C. 2). The only reason that can explain this fingering arrangement is the vibrato effect. Theoretically, because of the amplitude of a string, the strings are stiff at lower frets, so the vibrato there is almost inefficient.⁸⁸ Although the first A-major chord can be done with a vibrato, it is more reasonable to play these two chords in the fifth position to create a more noticeable vibrato. A vibrato is an expressive device, but there must be musical taste and good sense in use, like Tárrega's Example 33.

Example 33: Tárrega's Advanced Studies, No. 3, mm. 1-5

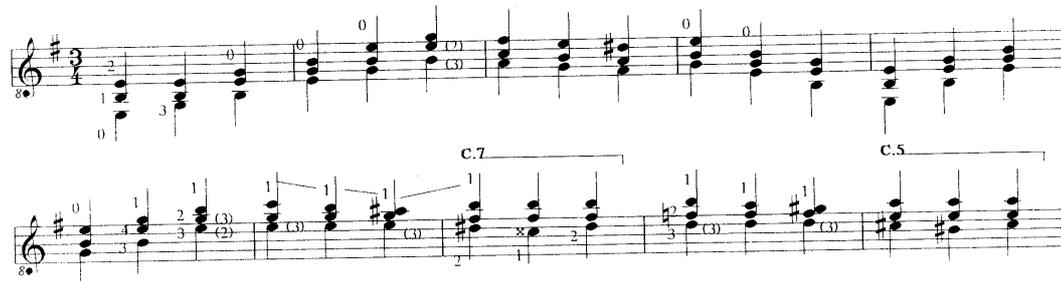
The guide finger and pivot finger have been mentioned and discussed frequently in this study; by using them correctly, some chord changes will become much easier. In Tárrega's advanced studies, he uses the guide finger most wisely. It is a fact that sometimes a

⁸⁸ Duncan, 93.

guitarist cannot find guide fingers or pivot fingers in a passage, but it is also true that sometimes there are several choices for which finger is to be the guide or pivot finger. When there is more than one choice of a guide finger in a blocked chord passage, Tárrega usually chooses one that belongs to the melody. Since the pivot and guide fingers are not entirely off the strings, which allows for connecting two consecutive notes without any break, one of them should be chosen for connecting the melody. In Example 34, the fourth finger is extensively used for a guide finger from mm. 1 to 3. Actually, there are some notes that can be held for the use of guide fingers, such as the E in the middle part and the E on the bass part. It is impossible for every finger of a blocked-chord section to be a guide finger, except with the parallel shift (the same fingerings switch from one position to another), so it is the player's responsibility to decide where the melody is and try to arrange a fingering that can solve the technical problem musically.

Example 34: Tárrega's Advanced Studies, No. 6, mm. 1-5

Example 35: Tárrega's Advanced Studies, No. 9, mm. 1-10



In Example 35, since this piece is basically all blocked chords and no lyric-like melody can be found, it appears that this piece should not be very slow. When a piece is in a faster tempo, it is less common to use vibratos and, that seems be the reason why Tárrega fingers many blocked chords with open string notes, such as B and E. Besides, since the highest note is the melody, Tárrega chooses the first finger as the guide finger from mm. 6 to 9 for connecting the melody.

In summary, since blocked chords contain many notes, they increase the complication of the left-hand fingerings. Using more guide fingers and pivot fingers will help to decrease the difficulty. If possible, it is necessary to use the pivot and guide fingers on the melodic part, which helps the melody sound more legato. In addition, sometimes it is also a helpful solution to play melodic notes with the vibrato technique. An impressive vibrato can not only prolong the value of notes but can also create a charming sound, which fits perfectly in music with a slow tempo. There are so many possibilities when deciding the fingerings or vibratos for guitar music. Tárrega usually chooses the ones that are the most musical.

Barré Technique Based on the Pujol and Roch Books

The focus of the barré technique is the left hand. A barré indicates that a player should press several strings at once with the index finger of the left hand at a single fret. Other fingers such as the little finger could be used for a barré but it is very rare. The shapes of people's index fingers vary; they are not completely straight or flat because of the knuckles. Therefore, Pujol suggests to "press the strings with the side of the index" for the barré technique.⁸⁹

In his book, Roch also reminds players that the "finger must be held perfectly straight, the wrist bent, and the hand well arched."⁹⁰ In his opinion the barré technique needs to be practiced in combination with other techniques so his barring exercises employ arpeggio playing, scale playing, and tremolo playing. In Example 36, Roch designs the barré technique in an arpeggio with the *p-i-m-a-m-i* fingering and the player is encouraged to practice this fingering pattern by ascending a half-step.

Example 36: Roch Exercise–Barré Technique with an Arpeggio



⁸⁹ Pujol, *Volume Two*, 97.

⁹⁰ Roch, *Volume One*, 85.

In his book, Pujol designs the barré technique with the alternation between the right-hand fingerings: *i-m* and *m-a*. He also suggests reversing this exercise by changing the right-hand fingering to *m-i* and *a-m*, which will become very useful in both barré technique and string crossing.

Example 37: Pujol Exercise–Barré Technique with the Right-Hand Alternation



Since the barré technique is more advanced and may be difficult for beginners, both Pujol and Roch remind students to take a rest when the left-hand finger becomes tired and stiff. The pressure will be more effective if a thumb is placed in a correct location. According to Pujol, the location of the left-hand thumb is very important because “the pressure of the barré must be counterbalanced by the left-hand thumb.”⁹¹ Roch also mentions that the thumb should “support itself precisely on its tip, somewhat below the middle of the neck, but never at the junction of the two joints.”⁹²

The modern technique has different opinions about the location of the thumb. According to Quine, the thumb needs to be placed lower on the guitar neck and to be perfectly straight at both joints (Example 38). He thinks the most effective barré will be made when a grip happens between the thumb and fingers. Sometimes keeping the elbow

⁹¹ Pujol, *Volume One*, 98.

⁹² Roch, *Volume One*, 85.

away from the side, and the wrist forward, will ensure a clear barré chord.⁹³ It is hard to judge which theory is better but it is generally accepted that other finger adjustments are required to master a barré.

Example 38: Left-Hand Thumb Position of a Barré Chord Suggested By Quine



Barré Technique in Tárrega's Elementary and Advanced Studies

In Tárrega's elementary studies, numbers 8, 12 and 23 are designed for practicing the barré technique. Elementary study no. 8 (Example 39) is designed for barré technique and a combination of an arpeggio. For the left hand, it requires players to barré the top four strings. For the right hand, players need to play an arpeggio first with the *i-m-a* fingering. Since this is an ascending arpeggio, as discussed in a previous section, the School of Tárrega will play this study with a free stroke style so that the sonority will not be compromised. In the second half of this study, the *i-m-a* arpeggio pattern is replaced by another fingering pattern: *i-a-m-a*.

⁹³ Quine, 64.

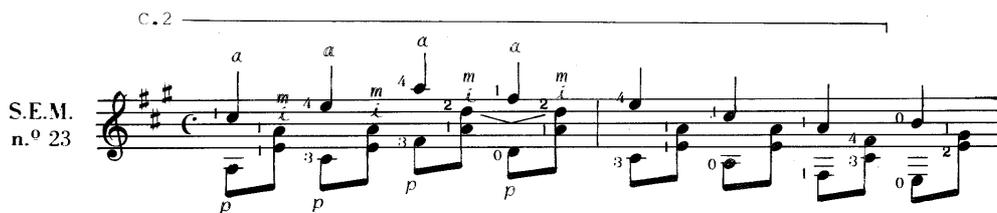
Example 39: Tárrega's Elementary Studies, No. 8, mm. 5 -16

Elementary study no. 12 (Example 40) is designed for barré technique with a focus on repeated notes. In regard to the repeated notes, both the fingerings of *i-m-i* or *p-i-p* are suitable in this piece. For the treble part, according to the principles of the School of Tárrega, the top quarter-note should be played with a rest stroke. This is because the quarter-note is the melody and a rest stroke is usually louder than a free stroke; besides, in most cases, when melodic notes and repeated notes are not on the adjacent string, a rest stroke will not influence the sonority. From the modern point of view, it is not wrong to play the quarter-note with a free stroke.

Example 40: Tárrega's Elementary Studies, No. 12, mm. 1-4

Elementary study no. 23 (Example 41a and 41b) is designed for barré technique with blocked chords. Similar to the Example 40, a rest stroke is suggested for playing the melody from the School of Tárrega's point of view. Also, the guide finger is used from the third beat to the fourth beat in the first measure (Example 41a). The right-hand fingering needs to be mentioned in measure 14 (Example 41b). Not surprisingly, Tárrega uses a barré fingering instead of an open string E on the third beat; this allows: (1) the whole melodic line of this measure to be played on the second string, (2) the second finger to function as a guide finger, and (3) a vibrato to be used.

Example 41a: Tárrega's Elementary Studies, No. 23, mm. 1-2



Example 41b: Tárrega's Elementary Studies, No. 23, mm. 13-14



In Tárrega's advanced studies, number 10 and 16 are also written for the purpose of barring. Number 10 combines barring with the arpeggio technique and number 16 combines it with the slur technique. Number 10 was already discussed in Example 27 in regard to sequential planting, and number 16 will be discussed in the next section regarding the slur technique. In the above examples, for the School of Tárrega, the barré technique seems to

simply train the strength of the fingers instead of explaining more details. Roch offers some fingering patterns and suggests practicing them in both descending and ascending order. Similarly, Pujol emphasizes that the barré technique is very important for harmonic sonority, so it requires practice. In Tárrega's advanced study number 10 (Example 42), players are required to perform series of barré chords almost all the time for the first eight measures, which is quite challenging even for an advanced student.

Example 42: Tárrega's Advanced Studies, No. 10, mm. 1-8

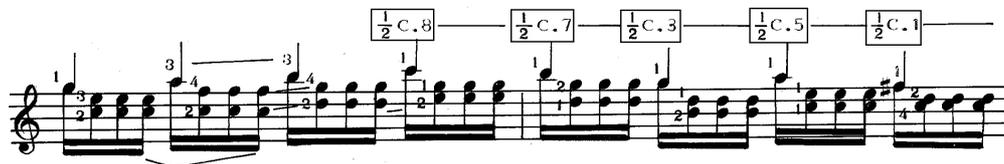
S.E.M.
N.º 10

It cannot be denied that more practice can improve the barré technique regarding the strength of the fingers, but there are also other strategies that can improve the barré technique. One of the strategies is being selective, according to Tennant.⁹⁴ Being selective

⁹⁴ Tennant, 23.

means figuring out exactly which notes underneath the finger need to sound. Sometimes a full barré is notated but perhaps only the top and the bottom notes need to be played; or, sometimes a half barré is enough instead of a full barré. It is unfortunate but true that most editions of guitar music make no distinction between a four-, five-, or six-string barré. What we can find in Tárrega's music is only the notations of a full barré (Example 42) or a half barré (Example 43).

Example 43: Notations of a Half Barré



The tiny difference between a four-, five-, and six-string barré will affect the difficulty level because players need to avoid dead spaces on the finger, such as the indentation between the tip and middle segments. Because of this, according to Duncan, if possible, it is better to “use a five- or four-string barré rather than a full barré.”⁹⁵ Therefore, Example 44, which is the same as Example 42 but with modified fingerings, is another option to avoid the intensive playing of a full barré while still keeping the harmonic sonority. In order to clarify how many strings need to be held, the “2/6 C.5” means playing the fifth position with a two-string barré, and the “5/6 C.7” means playing the seventh position with the five-string barré. These modifications include: (1) In measure 1, it is not necessary to play with a barré until the second measure; (2) The third finger functions as a guide finger from the last note (E) in measure 2 to the D-sharp in measure 3; (3) A three-string barré is suitable

⁹⁵ Duncan, 18.

for measure 4 and a four-string barré for measure 5; (4) The first half can be played without a barré; (5) A four-string barré is fine for measure 7, and it is not necessary to play with a barré in measure 8. It is a fact that the answer to ‘How many strings constitute the most comfortable barré?’ varies according to the individual; there are many elements such as the sizes of the hands and the strength and the length of the fingers that will make this question complicated. Example 44 is one of the possibilities, and the main purpose of this fingering is to avoid too much tension caused by a series of barré chords.

Example 44: Tárrega’s Advanced Studies, No.10, mm. 1-8, with Modified Fingerings

S.E.M.
N.º 10

5/6 c.5 ————— 6/6 c.7 —————

6/6 c.7 ————— 3/6 c.4 —————

4/6 c.9 ————— 4/6 c.6 —————

4/6 c.7 —————

(2) (3)

In summary, the School of Tárrega combines the barré technique with other technical issues, such as alternating between right-hand fingerings, blocked chords, arpeggios, and slurs. It is true that the index finger of the left hand will become stronger through more practicing, but it is also true that over-practicing can cause injury. In order to find a balance between these two situations, players need to find out how many strings really need to be held. It is important to be aware of what is more effective rather than just increasing strength without any other purposes.

“with some force and right up against the fret.”⁹⁷ There are no obvious differences between the School of Tárrega and the modern technique; a quote from Quine is another practical reminder of playing an ascending slur: “It is especially important that the tip joint of the finger is perpendicular and accuracy matters more than strength.”⁹⁸

A descending slur happens after playing the first note and when the second note is sounded by the left-hand finger plucking the string. A descending slur is also called a “pull-off.” According to Pujol, the main principle of playing descending slurs is to place all the left-hand fingers in advance. When plucking a descending slurred note, remember to pull the string toward to the next string, and the finger should come to rest on the next adjacent string.⁹⁹ In the descending slur of Example 43, therefore, the first finger should be placed at the first fret on the third string (G-sharp) at the same time as the second finger is placed at the second fret on the third string (A). Right after sounding the G-sharp, the second finger should rest on the second string. Both modern guitarists Quine and Tennant call it a kind of left-hand rest stroke.¹⁰⁰ Roch has a similar opinion to Pujol’s; Example 46 is taken from the Roch book, and it focuses on different right-hand fingering on the same triplets.¹⁰¹ While the left-hand fingerings keep changing (2-1-2, 3-2-3, and 4-3-4), the right-hand fingering (*m-i*) needs alternation as well. Overall, the principles of playing ascending, descending, and combinations of slurs are positively accepted by the modern technique.

⁹⁷ Pujol, *Volume Two*, 154.

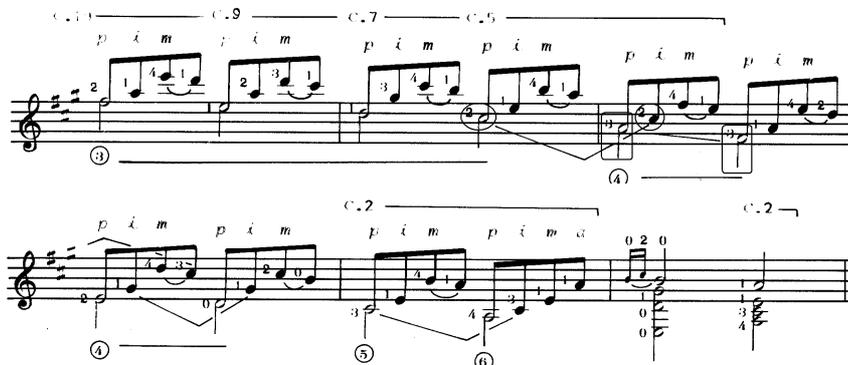
⁹⁸ Quine, 66.

⁹⁹ Pujol, *Volume Two*, 153.

¹⁰⁰ Quine, 66 and Tennant, 14.

¹⁰¹ Pascual Roch, *A Modern Method for the Guitar—School of Tárrega, Volume Three* (New York, NY: G. Schirmer, Inc., 1917), 3.

Example 48: Tárrega's Elementary Studies, No. 19, mm. 9-14



Before moving to Tárrega's advanced studies, it is necessary to explain why Pujol says: "slur gives greater facility in playing, as well as flexibility and expression to the musical nuances and phrases."¹⁰² From the technical point-of-view, the slur could have three main advantages: improving smoothness in note transitions, increasing speed, and avoiding awkward string crossing by the right hand.

Slurred notes can improve the speed and the legato of playing because most of the notes of guitar will be sounded by the co-ordination of both hands, except the six open-string notes. The coordination is extremely important but also difficult to be achieved perfectly since the right and the left hand should touch the string exactly at the same time. If slightly early actions or delays of either the left or right hand occur, the legato sound will disappear. According to Quine, "with a well-developed left-hand technique, the transition from note to note will be even smoother."¹⁰³ Example 49 shows Tárrega's idea of adding

¹⁰² Pujol, *Volume Two*, 151.

¹⁰³ Quine, 65.

slurs. Without these slurs, the piece still can be performed but with more difficulty especially in rapid passages.

In addition, Example 49 is also an example of slurring that can make musical phrases more expressive. Observed carefully, Tárrega arranges these slurs not only symmetrically but also rhythmically. Measures 33 and 36 are similar to the 1-4 left-hand fingerings and broken chords while measures 34 and 37 are both descending scale passages. Adding slurs on the same beat in similar musical phrases will reinforce the musical structure of a piece; it tells the audience how musical motives are organized by a composer and how they are presented by a performer. Therefore, by using slurs wisely, one can not only solve some technical problems but also convey a deeper understanding of a piece.

Example 49: Tárrega's Advanced Studies, No. 5, mm.30-37

Although there are many advantages to the slur technique, it has its limitations. According to Duncan, there is a slight difference in volume between the plucked note and slurred note. If a plucked note is sounded by a rest stroke, the difference will be more obvious. When slurred notes are used properly, “their place in melodic phrasing may be

likened to that of syllable stress in speech.”¹⁰⁴ There are many choices for guitarists to consider when deciding to slur or not. These elements include the character of the music, the technical problems, and the style of the historical period.

Advanced study no. 16 is a great study for the third technical advantage of slurring: to avoid awkward string crossing. This piece is written in arpeggio figure and it is very common to have many awkward string crossings. There are few ways to solve this problem. As mentioned in the scale and arpeggio sections, the first way is to change the right-hand fingering: the *a* finger is usually fingered for higher-string notes. Second, more careful practice will make the player get accustomed to the awkward string crossing. The third way is to use slur technique. Since the slurred notes are played with the left hand only, an awkward string crossing may not happen because the right hand is not even involved. If a slurred note is involved in an awkward string crossing, at least it can decrease the difficulty by repeating the right-hand fingering intentionally. This sentence sounds somewhat like a contradiction because it has been repeatedly emphasized that the alternation between fingers is one of the main principles of guitar playing. Just like walking relies on the alternation from one foot to the other, playing should rely on the alternation among fingers.¹⁰⁵ In this walking metaphor, if a person stops for a second and then resumes walking, it does not matter which foot he moves first. Similarly, a repeated fingering may be temporarily allowed because there is a short pause for the right hand when a note is slurred.

The above description will be clearer by explaining Examples 50a, 50b and 50c.

Example 50a is the first two measures of Tárrega’s original elementary study no. 16.

¹⁰⁴ Duncan, 87.

¹⁰⁵ Quine, 18.

Example 50b is the same passage re-fingered with all the slurs taken off. According to Tárrega's fingering in this piece, the *a* finger usually plays the highest notes in a measure and *p* usually plays the bass notes and other notes on the bottom three strings, which are general right-hand fingering principles. In Example 50a, the *a* finger (circled in the example) is repeated occasionally, and usually one of the repeated *a* fingerings is combined with a slur. This fingering is not perfect but works pretty well. On the other hand, in Example 50b, since there are no slurred notes, there will be many unnatural and awkward string crossings (bracketed in the example). For example, the *p* needs to be played on consecutive notes (underlined in the example). The more repeated fingerings are used, the more unnatural a passage will be for players' fingers physically and the slower the speed.

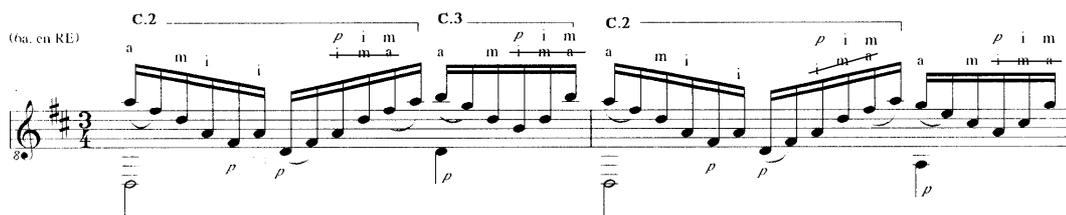
Example 50a: Tárrega's Advanced Studies, No. 16, mm.1-2—Original

Example 50b: Tárrega's Advanced Studies, No. 16, mm.1-2—Without Slurs

Although Tárrega's original fingering is already quite natural for the right-hand, it is still possible to finger these two measures, as shown in Example 50c, without repeating any

right-hand fingering and without any string crossing as long as the *p* is sometimes fingered for the notes on the third string. The location of the slurs remains unchanged; the only difference is that the *p-i-m* replaces the *i-m-a* fingering pattern. In general, the *p* plays on the bottom three strings, but it is not wrong either to finger the *p* on higher strings. The only minor issue of this fingering is the balance of the volume. According to Quine, since the thumb is the hand's strongest digit, it is capable of “a much more forceful stroke than the fingers.”¹⁰⁶ That is also why the *p* usually plays the bass for a louder and stronger harmonic support. In Example 50c, the *p* sometimes plays the melody, and it might cause uneven volume in the treble part because the *p* is stronger than *i*, *m*, and *a* for a critical listener.

Example 50c: Tárrega's Advanced Studies, No. 16, mm.1-2–Re-fingered



Another advanced study, no. 15 (Example 51), is also a good example for arranging the right hand. It is a pity that there is no left- and right-hand fingering marked in the original music; only a few slurs are notated. In order to offer more information about slur fingerings, a fingered edition is presented in Example 51 according to the following principles: (1) have the right-hand *a* finger play the highest note(s), (2) avoid awkward string crossing if possible, (3) avoid repeated right-hand fingering if possible, and (4) add slurs consistently in similar phrases. In the second beat of the second measure, although there is a

¹⁰⁶ Quine, 30.

string crossing (*i-m*), it is more acceptable because the slurred notes (D to B) allow time for the right hand to move from the second string to the third string.

Example 51: Tárrega's Advanced Studies, No. 15, mm.1-6 – Right-Hand Fingerings Added

S.E.M.
N.º 15

In summary, the slur has more advantages than disadvantages when a note is slurred with good musical sense. First, it improves the speed. Second, it helps the smoothness of the music. The first two improvements will be effective when a slur technique is developed and executed correctly. Third, it can avoid the awkward string crossing of the right hand. A repeated finger may be temporarily allowed because there is a pause for the right hand. In addition, when slurs are added with regular metric figures, which are consistent with the sense of phrase, both performers and listeners will comprehend a piece thoroughly. Therefore, when slurs are added properly, it can not only solve playing problems but create a more musical interpretation. It can be over-used, on the other hand, because slurred notes are usually weaker than non-slurred notes and may result in an improper interpretation.

Harmonics, Pizzicato, and Tremolo Techniques Based on the Pujol and Roch Books

Scale, arpeggio, blocked chords, barré, and slur techniques are the important fundamental elements in guitar playing. There are other special effects that the guitar can produce, such as harmonics, pizzicato, tambora, ponticello, dolce, glissando, portamento, golpe, rasgueado, and tremolo.¹⁰⁷ Only harmonics is discussed at length in the Roch and Pujol books. Pizzicato and tremolo appear in Tarregas studies.

Harmonics

A harmonic is a chime-like overtone produced when one finger lightly touches a string at certain points (nodes) and plucking it with another finger.¹⁰⁸ Harmonics have two types: natural and artificial harmonics. The acoustic theory of harmonics is to change the number of vibrations per second of a string.¹⁰⁹ Few illustrations from the Pujol books are helpful in understanding natural harmonics. Picture 1 of Example 52 is simply the length of a string. If a node is created at the twelfth fret (Picture 2), which is the half of the string, it doubles the number of vibrations per second and raises the fundamental sound by an octave. In Picture 3, nodes are created at the seventh and nineteenth fret, which are one-third of a string, it triples the number of vibrations and the string sounds an octave and a fifth above its fundamental note. When the number of vibrations quadruples (Picture 4), the nodes are created on the fifth fret, and the string sounds two octaves higher. There are more nodes of

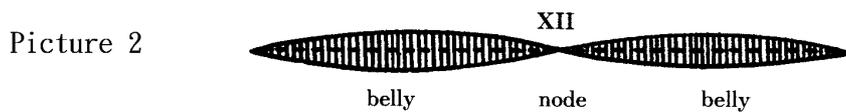
¹⁰⁷ Christopher Parkening, *The Christopher Parkening Guitar Method, Volume Two* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corporation, 1997), 47.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁰⁹ Pujol, *Volume Two*, 159.

a string; what commonly used for natural harmonics on the guitar are fifth-, seventh-, and twelfth-fret notes.

Example 52: Natural Harmonics



In order to produce a natural harmonic, a left-hand finger is placed lightly in contact with the string at one of its nodal points. When the string is plucked by a right-hand finger, the left-hand finger is immediately removed from the string. It does not really matter which right-hand finger is used to pluck the string, but Pujol advised “to pluck close the bridge, where the harmonics are clearest.”¹¹⁰ In general, for a clearer harmonic, plucking the string closer to the bridge will avoid the node.

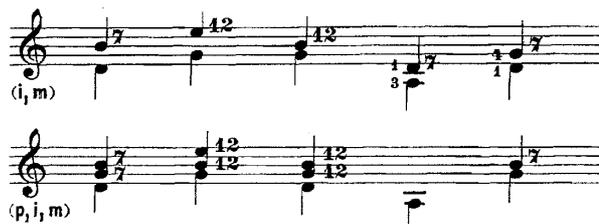
It is also common to have two-note or three-note natural harmonics at the same time. In these cases, Roch reminds performers to keep the left-hand fingers straight so the harmonics will sound clear.¹¹¹ This position is similar to the playing of a barré chord.

¹¹⁰ Pujol, *Volume Two*, 162.

¹¹¹ Roch, *Volume Two*, 56.

Instead of really pressing the strings down, the finger is lightly in contact with the string. In general, the index and fourth fingers of the left hand are commonly used for two-note or three-note natural harmonics.

Example 53: Roch Exercise of Harmonics of Two and Three Notes



Natural harmonics utilize the natural nodes of the vibrating string while artificial harmonics take advantage of a node midway between the bridge and the fret in which the string is played. Since a midway-node doubles the number of vibrations and produces the second partial which is an octave higher, artificial harmonics are also called octave harmonics. In order to produce an artificial harmonic, the right-hand finger will divide the string in half and pluck. For example, if one wants to play an artificial harmonic notated on the F (at the first fret on the first string), the right-hand finger should be positioned at the thirteenth fret on the first string. In order to produce an artificial harmonic, the left finger will be placed at the desired fret while the right hand is required to do two things at the same time: in general, the *i* finger will divide the string in half lightly touching the string. Then the *p* or *a* fingers pluck. Pujol's figure (Example 54) illustrates the right-hand position.

Example 54: Right-Hand Position When Playing an Artificial Harmonic



In his book, Pujol first suggests being familiar with the natural harmonics on the fingerboard and then moves to the artificial harmonics. When an artificial harmonic is played with the *a* finger, the thumb then is free to play the bass part. He designs some exercises for this purpose. In Example 55, the harmonics in the first measure are natural harmonics since it is indicated on open-string position. The first harmonic in the second measure is artificial and indicated to play on the fourteenth fret. Similar short exercises can be found in the Roch book too.

Example 55: Artificial Harmonics with the Thumb Plucking Simultaneously

Pizzicato

The pizzicato effect on the guitar is similar to the pizzicato on the violin. The pizzicato on the violin is plucked by finger instead of bow, which creates a fleshier and more muted sound. A classical guitar is always played by the fingers so the muted sound must be

created by changing the right-hand position. Roch carefully describes the pizzicato position: “players lay the outer edge of the right hand partly over the bridge and partly over the strings; the little finger rests on the soundboard with its last joint, not merely the tip.”¹¹² The modern technique does not require the little finger to rest on the soundboard; it merely hangs freely. Interestingly enough, there is no information regarding pizzicato playing in the Pujol books.

Tremolo

Tremolo literally means a rapid repetition of the same note. In classical guitar, it generally refers to a rapid repetition on the treble while the bass part offers harmonic support, giving an illusion of two instruments playing together.¹¹³ Interestingly, Tárrega composed several pieces in tremolo. One of the most famous pieces is *Recuerdos de la Alhambra*, but there is no specific tremolo section discussed in the Pujol and Roch books. What can be found in the Pujol book is a repeated four- note figure with a bass line (Example 56). In Example 56 Pujol recommends using two kinds of right-hand fingerings for the treble part: *i-m-a-m* and *a-m-i-m*.¹¹⁴ Since tremolo requires fast right-hand finger alternation and three-finger alternation is usually faster than two-finger alternation in repeated notes, adding the *a* finger will increase the speed. Therefore, a typical tremolo is a bass note combined with three sixteenth- or thirty-second notes. The modern technique will normally be fingered *p-a-m-i*. It is also possible to play the tremolo with other right-hand fingering as long as the repetition is even and not too slow.

¹¹² Roch, *Volume Two*, 75.

¹¹³ Parkening, *Volume Two*, 46.

¹¹⁴ Pujol, *Volume Three*, 53.

Example 56: Pujol Exercise–Tremolo-Like

Pizzicato, Harmonics, and Tremolo Techniques in Tárrega's Studies

Since pizzicato, harmonics, and tremolo techniques belong to the special sound effects in guitar playing, there are no specific elementary studies written for harmonics, pizzicato, and, tremolo. However, advanced study no. 18 is written for the purpose of pizzicato, and no. 21 contains a section with intensive artificial harmonics and tremolo. As mentioned before, there is not enough information in the Pujol and Roch books, so modern techniques will be visited and applied for a thorough understanding of Tárrega's studies.

Advanced study no. 18 demands a highly developed pizzicato technique. In general, pizzicato is used in a few phrases or a few notes. This playing will be a problem when a section contains normal tones and pizzicato sections at the same time; an example would be when the treble is a normal blocked chord when there is a pizzicato bass line. Since moving the right hand to the bridge will change the sound of every note, normal pizzicato playing cannot be applied. However, it is possible to create a pizzicato-like sound by playing the bass line with the flesh of the thumb and mute the note as soon as possible. According to

Parkening, one of the principal pupils of Andrés Segovia, Segovia once created a pizzicato-like sound by using the back portion of the thumb for instant dampening of the bass string.¹¹⁵ The timbre of the sound could be different by changing the way of striking a string, which could be nail only and flesh only. Plucking the bass with the flesh will create a muffled sound, which is quite similar to the pizzicato. In Example 57, the treble is blocked chords and the pizzicato is marked in the beginning of the piece. It is fine to play the whole piece all in a normal pizzicato position; however, when a piece sounds muted all the time, there is no special moment, for pizzicato should be used for a surprising sound effect. Therefore, for advanced students, it is suggested that only the bass line is needed to play with *pizzicato* technique.

Example 57: Tárrega's Advanced Studies, No. 18, mm.1-6

Advanced study no. 21 is a study that contains blocked chords, artificial harmonics, and tremolo techniques. The artificial harmonic section appears in measures 39 to 55. In these measures, the harmonics function as the main melody and are written in the bottom part. Since a harmonic is usually softer than a played note, it is important to make sure the

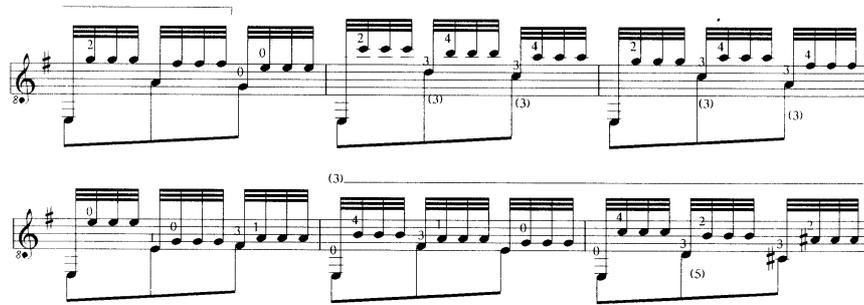
¹¹⁵ Parkening, *Volume Two*, 44.

harmonics are clearly heard. As mentioned before, an artificial harmonic is produced when the index finger lightly touches on the string while another finger (usually the thumb or the ring finger) plucks the string. It is recommended to play the harmonics with the right-hand thumb instead of the ring finger for a clearer tone quality. In the modern approach, which is the flesh-nail combination, a squeak will occur when the nail touches the bottom three strings because they are wound with metal. If an artificial harmonic happens on the top three strings (nylon), a squeak will not happen. Additionally, the thumb does not produce a squeak as loud as the fingers do because the nail of thumb is parallel with the string while the nails of fingers touch the string at a angle. In this case, since the artificial harmonics in Example 58 are all written in the bottom strings, it is necessary to pluck the strings with the thumb, if a player uses the flesh-nail playing style. It may be not matter which finger is used for those players who play without nails.

Example 58: Tárrega's Advanced Studies, No. 21, mm.38-46

The second half of advanced study no. 21 is written for tremolo (Example 59).

Example 59: Tárrega's Advanced Studies, No. 21, mm.139-144



As mentioned before, a good tremolo will create the illusion for the audience that there are two instruments playing together. Psychologically, this illusion makes the melody seem to be constantly sustained; the key to this illusion is the evenness of articulation.¹¹⁶ In order to create an even articulation, one should simply think of four notes, instead of dividing tremolo into the thumb plus the three notes. In general, practicing with slower staccato makes it sound extremely smooth when played quickly. Another modern guitarist Richard Provost also reminds players to be aware of the following points: sound quality, the balance of fingers, and sequential planting, which are the keys to an even tremolo¹¹⁷.

In summary, both the natural and artificial harmonics are quite common in Tárrega's advanced studies while the pizzicato and tremolo techniques are not emphasized that much. It is not surprising because the pizzicato is used for adding sound effects, and the tremolo is an advanced skill that cannot be learned in a short period of time. It is true that the scale, arpeggio, blocked chord, barré and slur techniques are more crucial and fundamental

¹¹⁶ Tennant, 56.

¹¹⁷ Provost, *Volume Two*, 98.

concepts in guitar playing, but harmonics, pizzicato, and tremolo are also important for adding special sound effects. Although Pujol and Roch did not discuss tremolo, the modern technique offers more principles which are helpful when learning these special techniques in Tárrega's advanced studies.

Overall, chapter four discusses fundamental concepts such as scale, arpeggio, blocked chords, barré, and slur technique as well as special techniques such as harmonics, pizzicato, and tremolo from the School of Tárrega's point of view. The modern approaches are also offered for comparison. In order to guide guitar students into having a more complete idea about how and what to practice, it may be practical to have a snapshot of Tárrega's elementary and advanced studies. Although all these studies have their own advantages, it will be more effective if students can devote time to a few of them for overcoming specific technical problem. Please see the appendix for a brief review of Tárrega's studies.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Tárrega, who set the modern playing position based on Torres' guitar, and two of his outstanding students, Pujol and Roch, who individually wrote three volumes of method books, are the foundation of the School of Tárrega. It is a pity that Tárrega kept performing, composing, and giving lessons but did not write his own methods. The only way to fully comprehend Tárrega's thirty elementary-level studies and twenty-five intermediate- and advanced-level studies is to refer back to the Pujol and Roch books. In addition, it is important to compare the principles between the School of Tárrega and modern guitar technique. Although not every principle of the School of Tárrega is completely adopted by current guitarists, most of the concepts are still positive and practical with a few modifications.

For the sitting and playing position, a footstool was adapted by Tárrega and has been accepted by modern players. In addition to the footstool, a guitar support is also used by modern players for placing two feet directly on the floor. The main difference in playing position between the School of Tárrega and the modern player is that the former will keep the right-hand fingers perpendicular to the strings while the latter will have the fingers touch

the strings at a slight angle. The School of Tárrega also tends to make the left- and right-hand wrists arched while modern players will keep both wrists relatively straight so that the tendons inside the carpal tunnels can move freely without tension.

After exploring the basic ideas of the School of Tárrega, Tárrega's thirty elementary and twenty-five advanced studies were analyzed. Since these studies are designed for the specific technical issues, it is more effective to study them in groups according to similar technical focuses instead of the published order. The first discussed issue is scale playing. In general, the left-hand fingers should be positioned in advance in descending passages. Sometimes the left-hand finger(s) should be held for the following note(s) to minimize finger movements, if possible. Arrangement of the right-hand fingering is extremely important in scale playing and it has been a central focus in this paper. In order to execute a scale passage without much difficulty, it is necessary to alternate the right-hand fingers, such as the *i-m* or *m-i* alternations as recommended by the School of Tárrega. Avoiding an awkward string crossing is always tricky and full of many possible solutions. When ascending, the *a* finger is usually used for the highest note. Some modern players may use the *p* on higher strings though the different volume between fingers and thumb might be an issue for critical listeners.

Arpeggio playing on the guitar is somewhat different from other instruments in that guitarists will usually hold every note in a measure so that the sound will resonate better, like the pedal effect on the piano. Therefore, the left-finger will press the note(s) in advance and hold as long as possible. There is a slight difference between the School of Tárrega and the modern approach. Modern players will always use free stroke in the right hand, no matter whether playing an ascending or descending arpeggio. The School of Tárrega, on the other

hand, will use a rest stroke on the highest note in a descending arpeggio, as long as the rest stroke will not affect the resonance of the harmony.

Blocked chord playing is quite common in guitar music because it outlines the harmony and often carries the main melody in the top, middle, or bottom part. Since blocked chords contain many notes at the same time, the challenge is to minimize the left-hand movement by using guide fingers and pivot fingers. When there is more than one choice Tárrega will use the one that belongs to the main melody, so that the melody will be better connected. There is one main difference regarding the use of the right hand: The School of Tárrega will play a blocked chord relying more on the tip joints while the modern player will typically play from the main knuckles.

Barré technique is unique and consistent practice is required for developing the strength of the left hand. Both the School of Tárrega and modern players are reminded not to over practice barré technique. The School of Tárrega designs the barré exercises combined with other technical issues, such as the arpeggio and slur. Modern players advise performers to find out how many strings really need to be held under the barré, which will not waste energy.

The slur is another special skill demanding a well-developed technique, adequate music knowledge and taste. Technically, it can increase the speed and solve unwanted awkward string crossing for the right hand. Musically, it can communicate a performer's understanding of the phrase structure if suitably fingered. Harmonics, pizzicato, and tremolo techniques are important for special sound effects. It is a pity that these special effects are less prominent in Tárrega's studies.

My study discusses Tárrega's guitar studies in particular. After grouping these studies, most of the technical issues are discussed. Through a comparison between the School of Tárrega and the modern approach, guitar players can comprehend the advantages and disadvantages from different points of view. Sometimes there is no right or wrong technique; a mature guitarist will find the technique that is most suitable for him/her.

Tárrega is noted for being an educator, performer, transcriber, and composer. It is without doubt that Tárrega's studies are not only effective in improving one's playing skills but are also written with great musical taste, which only can be done by an outstanding educator and composer. Although special sound effects are not the focus in his studies, these special techniques are frequently used in Tárrega's masterpieces and transcriptions. Future study is necessary to see how Tárrega transcribed pieces from other instruments for the guitar. This research will be very valuable in understanding Tárrega's transcribing skills, in particular his use of these special sound effects.

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Scores

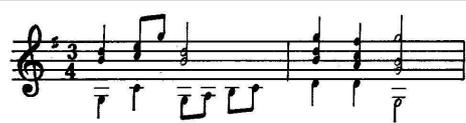
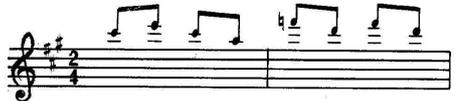
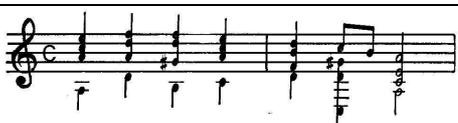
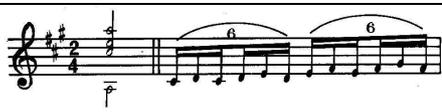
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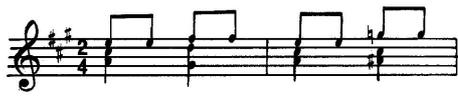
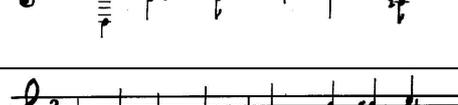
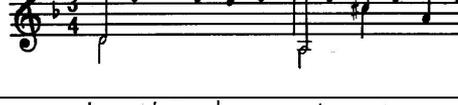
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APPENDIX

Tárrega's Thirty Elementary Studies

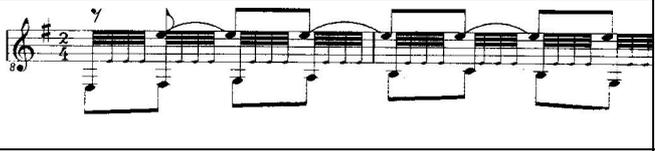
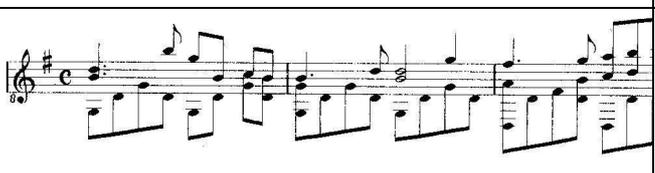
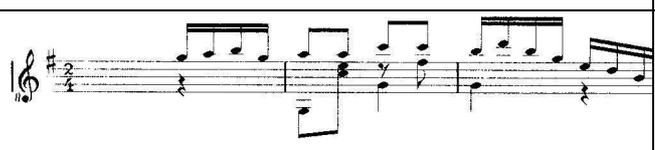
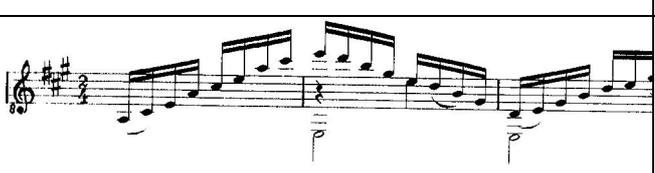
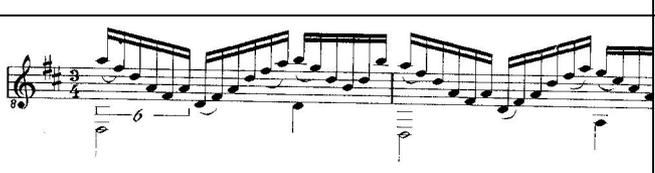
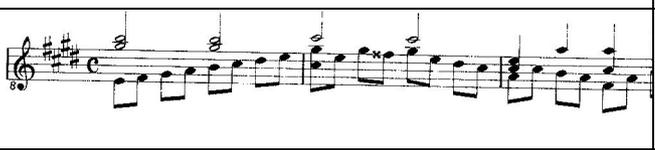
No. 1		Scale playing: focusing on the alternation between right-hand fingers
No. 2		Arpeggio playing:
No. 3		Blocked chords and repeated notes
No. 4		Arpeggio playing in combination with repeated notes
No. 5		Blocked chords
No. 6		The thumb plays the bass melody
No. 7		Chromatic scale
No. 8		Arpeggio playing with barré chords
No. 9		The alternation between the <i>m-a</i> fingers
No. 10		Scale playing with alternation between right-hand fingers

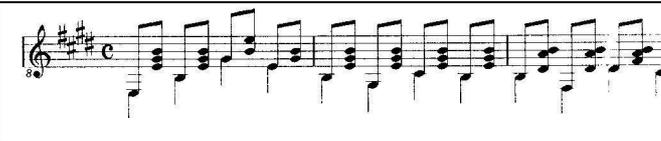
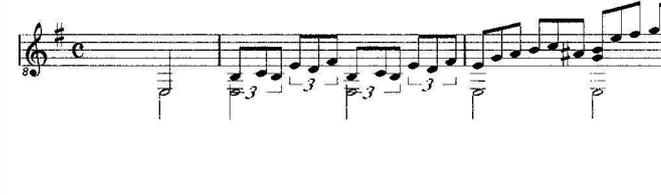
No. 11		Scale playing
No. 12		Repeated bass notes while focusing on treble melodic part
No. 13		Scale playing
No. 14		Blocked chords with pivot and guide fingers
No. 15		Guide fingers for changing positions
No. 16		Blocked chords and arpeggio playing with barré chords
No. 17		Blocked chords and arpeggio playing with barré chords
No. 18		Scale playing with an intensive use of the <i>a</i> finger
No. 19		Slur playing
No. 20		Chromatic scale with the <i>a</i> finger for string crossing
No. 21		Scale playing with guide finger for changing positions

No. 22		Blocked chords
No. 23		Broken chords with the <i>a</i> finger plays the top melody
No. 24		<i>i-m-a</i> for the top triple and the thumb plays the bass notes
No. 25		Arpeggio playing with slur technique
No. 26		Blocked chords with the barré technique
No. 27		Broken chords with <i>i-m</i> play simultaneously
No. 28		Arpeggio playing with focus on <i>p-i-m-i</i> , <i>a-i-m-i</i> , and <i>p-i-p-m</i> .
No. 29		Blocked chords with intensive guide fingers
No. 30		Scale playing

Tárrega's Twenty-Five Advanced Studies

No. 1		Scale playing
No. 2		Blocked chords
No. 3		Blocked chords
No. 4		Blocked chords and arpeggio playing
No. 5		Scale playing with slur technique
No. 6		Blocked chords and arpeggio playing
No. 7		Blocked chords with <i>p-i-m-a-m-i</i> arpeggio
No. 8		Slur playing in triplet
No. 9		Rapid three- note and four-note blocked chords

No. 10		Arpeggio playing applies modified sequential playing
No. 11		Repeated sixteenth notes in the middle voice
No. 12		Arpeggio playing with slurs
No. 13		Three-part texture with melody on the top
No. 14		Melody on the top with few harmonics and pizzicato
No. 15		Arpeggio playing with slur technique
No. 16		Arpeggio playing with slur and barré techniques
No. 17		Single melody with blocked chords
No. 18		Pizzicato technique with barré chords
No. 19		Blocked chords with arpeggio playing

No. 20		Blocked chords with melody in the bottom and top part
No. 21		Scale playing with intensive artificial harmonics, pizzicato and tremolo techniques
No. 22		Three-part texture with the melody in the bass
No. 23		Triplet in arpeggios with slur technique
No. 24		Arpeggio playing with slurs on the weak beat
No. 25		Three-note slurs and arpeggio playing