

The Secrets to Mastering *Rumores de la Caleta*

By Karl Wohlwend

With contributions from Andrew J. Ruzicho, II

copyright 2006 Karl Wohlwend and Andy Ruzicho

About the author:

Karl Wohlwend is Columbus, Ohio's leading classical guitar instructor. He holds a Master of Music Degree in Performance from The Cleveland Institute of Music, where he was a student of John Holmquist. He did his undergraduate degree with Christopher Berg and has had extensive study with Julian Gray at the Peabody Conservatory. He served for 10 years on the faculty of the Capital University Conservatory of Music and at Ohio Wesleyan University, and is currently on the faculty at Otterbein College. He has extensive experience as a performer, having given solo classical guitar recitals throughout the United States. Karl is in great demand in the midwest to provide classical guitar instruction at universities, workshops, and clinics. He has been on the faculty of the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music Classical Guitar Workshop since 1996.

Forward – This publication is not intended to be a substitute for the guidance that a competent instructor can provide, nor is can it be a magic wand that will somehow enable you to suddenly play this piece of music exactly the way you've heard it on recordings. Rather, think of this guide as your practice companion, designed to help you focus your thoughts and make your practice as effective as it can be. It is my way of sharing with you the experience of my twenty years of playing and teaching, so that you may enjoy your work with this incredible piece of music.

Approaching a new piece of music: the importance of formulating a plan

How many times in life have you just done something without thinking about it? We have all had the experience of traveling to a new destination and getting lost only because we didn't take five minutes before the trip to look at a map. Our time is valuable to us, but we often squander it making up for lack of proper preparation. It is no different in our work life, favorite sports, or with the guitar.

If nothing else, formulating a plan helps to focus your mind on the task at hand and ensures that your first steps will be strong. The value of this creates momentum which will carry on into all of your work.

How many times have you approached a new piece and started by picking up your guitar and attempting to play from the beginning of a piece? This is a common way to begin work, but is certainly not the most sensible. You will be much more successful in learning the piece if you approach it with a plan. You will find that you will be most successful with a plan that you determine on your own, however I will provide you with a suggested plan to get you started.

You might find that using different colored pencils or highlighters could be helpful in marking your score.

- 1 - First, determine your long-term goals for the piece. Perhaps you just want to have a rough idea of how the piece goes or perhaps you want to perform the piece in public.
- 2 - Without your instrument, look through the score. Try to hear the music in your head as best you can as you look over the printed music.
- 3- Determine the key in which the piece is written and play some scales and chord progressions in that key.
- 4 - Determine the time signature, and identify any changes in the piece.
- 5 - Determine the performance tempo and any tempo changes in the piece.
- 6- Can you divide the piece into sections? Try to describe how the sections differ, using terms that make sense to you. Consider mood, if you are able.
- 7- Make note of dynamic markings, articulation marks (accents, etc), and other indications. Look up any terms that are unfamiliar to you..
- 8- Find a recording, or have your instructor play the music and listen to the recording with the your marked score in hand. Change anything that needs revision upon listening.

- 9- Determine where you should start practicing the piece. The beginning is not always the best answer, nor should you work on the entire piece at every practice session. I like to start with the last phrase and work back from there, so that I'm always playing into the more familiar material. If the piece presents a technical challenge that is particularly troublesome for you, you might want to start with that. Or maybe there is a section that you find especially dramatic and want to experience that feeling, so you start there. Or maybe you just like a particular section the best, so you start there. It doesn't matter, as long as you've thought about it beforehand and that it makes sense for your plan. In any case, you should allocate most of your practice time on the parts that are most difficult for you.
- 10- Make sure you understand the rhythms in your chosen starting point. Set the metronome to half-tempo or less, and tap the rhythms accurately before you attempt to play. Do this work in small sections.
- 11- Consider both left and right hand fingerings. If the printed ones don't make sense to you, change them. Try to formulate at least a basic idea of fingering for both hands before you attempt to play. Do this work in small sections.
- 12- Only when you are confident in your plan, begin to play. You might find it easier to approach each section separately, going through all of these steps individually for each one. With long pieces, this is absolutely necessary.

Feel free to modify these suggestions or develop your own plan to meet your own need. What is important is to simply have a plan, even if it changes.

Rumores de la Caleta, malagueña, Op. 71, no. 6 - Isaac Albéniz (1860-1909)

I. Notes on the piece

Albéniz published this work in Madrid in 1887. It is the sixth of seven pieces in a suite entitled *Recuerdos de Viaje*, or “Travel Impressions.” The title of this piece roughly translates to “Murmurs of the Inlet.” All of Albeniz' music was originally written for piano. The composer's style often drew on Spanish folk music and flamenco for inspiration, so there is often imitation of guitaristic sounds. This is one reason why the piece has become much more popular for guitar than it ever was for piano. This piece is subtitled “malaguena,” which is a flamenco form designed to highlight an expressive form of singing with guitar accompaniment. (More information is available at <http://www.esflamenco.com/palos/enmalagena.html>)

II. Recommended editions

The Library of Guitar Classics, ed. Jerry Willard, Amsco 92895

Virtuoso Music for Guitar: Christopher Parkening Romanza, Antigua Casa Sherry-Brener

Isaac Albeniz: 26 Pieces Arranged for Guitar, ed. Stanley Yates, Mel Bay 97344

note: the fine transcription in this edition is in the original keys of A modal/F major, while the vast majority of recordings and transcriptions for guitar are in E modal/C major. This edition is of the highest order of scholarship and contains a wealth of information. I highly recommend it, although for the purposes of this guide, I will refer to the E/C transcription.

III. Difficulty of piece

This piece is recommended for the advanced intermediate student. It requires a knowledge of the entire fingerboard, a good deal of left-hand finger independence, and fluency with the specialized left-hand slurring technique. The rhythms in this piece are rather complicated. In addition, its many changes in mood make it a challenge for the expressive musician.

IV. Road map to *Rumores de la Caleta*

The piece is divided into two broad sections, the first section being presented with an introduction and repeated with slight variation. After an initial arpeggiated E major chord “fanfare,” the introduction continues to measure 26. It is reminiscent of a flamenco guitarist's introduction to a singer's entrance. After the introduction, the tempo slows. The “singer” appears with the melodic content at measure 26, interspersed with accompaniment figures from the introduction. The “singing” is repeated at measure 44 with a slight variation, then the accompaniment figures bring us to a halt with the E major chord arpeggio in measures 69 and 70. This material is impressionistic of a typical flamenco malaguena, alternating between singing and guitar playing, and is based on a tonal center of E, using the phrygian and phrygian dominant (also called *ahava rabboh*, Spanish phrygian, or Freygish) modes. These modes are often used in Middle Eastern