

RETHINKING GUITAR PEDAGOGY

By Richard Provost

I think we would all agree that the classical guitar has risen to heights never imagined twenty years ago. Along with classical guitar being recognized by the leading music schools and conservatories throughout the world, the majority of major concert guitarists are products of these colleges.

One area that has not experienced the same growth is the teaching of amateur players, both pre- and post-college age. Why, in spite of the work being done in this field by a number of dedicated and talented teachers, are we not seeing the same growth and development as in the college area? While there are many reasons, a major one is that we have never fully identified the components that go into successful guitar teaching for all levels and aspirations.

Several years ago a former student, Renee Korwan, wrote a paper for a Philosophy of Education class dealing with three stages of learning and their application to instrumental music. Instead of using the traditional beginner, intermediate and advanced classifications, she reclassified them: fundamental, transitional and self-actuating. In addition, she outlined the major objectives, goals, and levels of responsibility between the teacher and student for each level. Reading this paper I was struck by how easily this idea could be adapted to guitar teaching and how it could greatly clarify a process that for too long has remained a mystery.

We know what to expect from graduates of a performance program, but what should we expect from amateur players? College guitar teachers are amazed at the disparity of training that their entering freshmen receive. Some who have been studying a number of years have a large repertoire but no knowledge of technique or musicianship; others have reasonable technique but no repertoire. While the student plays a role in this scenario, so does the teacher.

As we know, teaching and performing are two separate skills that are not always mutually inclusive. A good performer is not a good teacher until he has looked at how he developed his skills and learned how to teach these skills to others. Often, teachers of pre-college students aren't really clear regarding their expectations of students. Many pre-college teachers are dealing with students of varying degrees of ability and motivation. In addition, they often must teach a variety of musical styles. This, in itself, can make life difficult for the teacher. When we look at teachers of other instruments, we find that they have a clearer understanding of what to expect from their students and the skills the students need to acquire. In

order for guitar teachers to fully develop their pre-college students they need to examine the skills and knowledge possessed by similar students of other instruments.

Many cities and towns around the world have community orchestras and bands composed of musicians who learned to play music during their youth. These are not professional musicians but instrumentalists who play well and are capable of learning music without the aid of a teacher. This is also true of many adult pianists who can accompany choral groups and play the occasional solo classical selection. This is generally not true of amateur classical guitarists. In examining how other instrumentalists are taught, I discovered many techniques that could be applied to guitar teaching. Besides these techniques, I found that applying Ms. Korwan's ideas would also improve classical guitar teaching. The following approach was developed from this examination. It is one that former students and I have found to be beneficial in teaching not only amateur guitarists but guitarists aspiring to a professional career.

I. Fundamental Stage (Beginner)

The objective of the fundamental stage is to establish a strong musical and technical foundation for future learning. Within this stage there are six categories that need to be addressed.

Technique Rhythm Daily Practice Theory Interpretation Performance
While the role of the teacher is always important, this stage requires the most from the teacher. Since the student has little knowledge of music, it is important that the teacher have a clear well-developed methodology designed to present and develop appropriate material in the previously mentioned categories. The role of the student in this stage is to practice daily and follow the teacher's directions. Translating this into percentages, the teacher's responsibility would be approximately ninety percent and the student's, ten percent.

The vocabulary used by the teacher is also important. The statements should be clear and direct. (i.e., The guitar is held..... Your hand position is..., etc.) It is important, to avoid statements that force the student to make choices before he is ready to evaluate the options. Giving the student too many choices causes confusion. Yes, there are variations in hand positions and in how to hold the guitar, but at this stage, the student does not need this information. Moreover he does not possess sufficient knowledge or experience to know what to do with this information. It is the teacher's responsibility to teach the most appropriate technique to the individual student; the student should not be allowed to decide. The teacher must present only the information needed by this student to establish his basic technical foundation.

TECHNIQUE

The student in this stage needs to acquire a good foundation in the following areas:

1. Sitting and holding the guitar.
2. Basic hand positions.
3. Rest-stroke technique.
4. Left-hand technique.
5. Free strokes (arpeggios and chords. pim, pima, pmi, pami.).
6. Basic first position reading skills.
7. Listening to oneself.
8. Establishing an appropriate repertoire. Beginning with single line melody and progressing to simple music in two parts or simple bass/chord pieces.
9. Integrating and developing rhythmic skills.

The above material is covered to varying degrees in all beginning methods. There are areas, however, that I have found often overlooked in teaching from these methods:

Sitting and holding the guitar is an acquired skill. I have had very few students establish a good sitting position after the first lesson. The teacher needs to constantly correct and reinforce the principles of basic sitting position. It is no easy task, particularly when working with pre-teen and teenage students, but a good sitting position is the foundation for a good technique.

The basic hand positions, as with the sitting position, take time to develop. It is important to remember that method books are designed for the average student. Some students take longer to develop a hand position than others. I feel that it is important not to push the development of repertoire at the expense of establishing a good hand position.

Developing good alternation between the index and middle fingers is often one of the most neglected aspects of beginning classical guitar study. It is important that the teacher provide the necessary fingering information to develop this technique. For some students, developing good finger alternation may be as simple as the teacher pointing out the occasional repeated finger. For others, it may require that all right hand fingerings be written in the music. As difficult as this may be for some students, it would be far more difficult for them to undo bad habits in the more advanced stages. If one believes that good finger alternation is a necessity for future growth and musical development, then it must be learned at the fundamental level.

Establishing a good left hand technique presents many of the same difficulties as developing the right hand. Students should be encouraged to

play pieces with prescribed left-hand fingerings rather than using whatever fingers are convenient. As with the right hand, it is easier to teach good concepts at this stage than to correct bad habits at a more advanced level.

Listening to oneself is one of the more difficult tasks to teach. I believe that it is never too early to teach students to listen and constructively critique their work. One approach is to record the students playing pieces that they play well. Have the students listen to the recording and point out what they are doing well. Ask them how they practiced to play at such a level. Evaluating what goes into a good performance develops confidence and knowledge, and this knowledge enables them to identify problem areas in pieces more easily. Another approach is to provide the students with a recording of the pieces they are learning. A recording containing the piece played at several tempos allows students to practice with the recording and, while playing, listen to how they sound.

Remember, even the best method is not perfect. Some students will need supplementary material, others will not. Progress at this stage does not always indicate talent or ability but rather motivation and maturation.

RHYTHM

Rhythm when combined with pitch provides melody. Since beginning students are busy learning a number of skills - sitting position, hand position, note reading, fingerings, etc. - it is not unusual for them to forget rhythm. Also, since much of the playing they do at this level is solo, it is easy for the teacher to overlook minor rhythmic inaccuracies when many other aspects of their playing may be excellent. Remember that this is the fundamental stage, and the importance of good rhythmic training is part of the playing foundation.

In public school music programs students are taught to count the rhythms out loud and the teacher either counts along or taps out the beat while the students play. Guitar students often resist counting; however, a weekly reminder as well as counting aloud during the lesson will quickly reinforce the importance of this skill. Another way is to make duet-playing a part of each lesson. As soon as the students have developed the necessary skills to play simple pieces without stumbling, duets can be introduced. Duet-playing allows students to quickly experience the importance of rhythm in music. The following are several collections that work well with students at this level:

Pleyel, I. Six Little Duets for Two Violins Op 8, G. Schirmer, Inc.

Williams Grossman, J. Elementary Trios I,

_____. Fifteen Easy Trios in First Position. (Both are available from the author at: 36 Seven Oaks La., Brewster, NY 10509, USA)

DAILY PRACTICE

Since all the pieces or studies at the fundamental stage are short, repetition becomes the basis for practice. The teacher, however, should take every opportunity to point out where repeating a particular measure or section would be more efficient than repeating the entire piece. This is also the time to show students how to work on particular technical problems they may have in their pieces.

THEORY

Theory is another often overlooked part of beginning teaching. The pieces are short, not particularly complicated technically or musically - why does the student need to know theory? I feel that what we teach in the fundamental stage lays the foundation for what is to come. The sooner a student sees the relationship between music and theory, the better he will play. I introduce theory concepts as soon as the student begins to feel comfortable with basic technical skills. If the material taught is functional and frequently reinforced, students will feel as comfortable with theory as with playing. Singing the melodies will also develop their ears and, more importantly, begin to train them to hear how they want a piece to sound.

INTERPRETATION

The fundamental stage is also an excellent place to begin to discuss interpretation. The music is simple in nature with clearly defined phrases and sections. I have found that when students begin to think musically at this level, their playing improves dramatically. Since the phrase is one of the foundations of music, it should be taught in the fundamental stage. It is also easy to teach simple AB and ABA forms since they are used for most of the music played in this stage.

PERFORMANCE

It is never too early to learn to perform. Teachers often think that a student must be playing for several years before considering performance. Since performance is as much a skill as note reading, it is important to develop it at the same pace and time as other basic skills. In developing this skill, we must remember that performance in the fundamental stage must provide positive reinforcement for the student. The following are helpful guidelines:

- The student must always be well prepared to perform.
- He/she should possess the necessary technical control to execute these pieces with few errors.
- Initial performances should be informal, either for several other

students or parents and friends of the student.

- The pieces should be short, one to three minutes in length.
- The student needs to feel completely confident with what he will perform.

Discuss the performance at the lesson immediately following the performance. It is important to cover both positive and negative aspects since discussing only one aspect presents a distorted picture to the student. Also, discuss how to use what the student has learned through performance to improve the playing. Performing is a skill that takes time to acquire and will have its ups and downs. A well-prepared student can have a poor performance, but it is the teacher's responsibility to put the performance in the proper perspective.

As the student progresses the lesson length will need to be increased. Base the length of the lesson on the level of the student and the skills being taught. For the beginning student a thirty minute lesson is sufficient, but as the student progresses, that lesson time will need to be increased to forty-five minutes and eventually to one hour.

Working with students in the fundamental can sometimes be tedious and frustrating. Students want to learn, but some are not always willing to follow the teacher's instruction. In some situations, it may be wise to defer or allow greater latitude with certain techniques or skills; teaching them at a later stage of development. This decision should always be made with the student's best interest in mind rather than out of frustration.

II. Transitional Stage (Intermediate)

In the transitional stage, students develop skills that will allow them to reach full musical potential. In this stage, they begin to assume a greater role in learning and more responsibility for their own growth. The teacher needs to provide a supportive environment that will allow growth to occur. This involves gradually giving students greater responsibility for growth and learning in areas where they are equipped to take responsibility. Are all students willing and able to take on this greater role? Of course not. Some are willing to assume more responsibility immediately, others need more time and nurturing, and some will never take complete responsibility. The teacher can only guide and assist each student in assuming a greater role in the learning process. One way is for the teacher to use a different teaching vocabulary. In the fundamental stage, the vocabulary consists of clear directions with little flexibility. In the transitional stage, flexibility becomes the norm. It recognizes the need to encourage students, with guidance, to find the best approach to reach their goals. This can best be done by using what Barry Green (*The Inner Game of Music*, Anchor Press/Doubleday,

1986) calls "awareness language." For example, instead of telling a student what is wrong with his right hand, ask him to focus on the right hand. If he is repeating fingers, ask him to focus on the alternation of i and m. This approach will begin to develop a greater awareness of what students do when they practice and play. This increased awareness will make it easier for them to predict the results of their practice.

Another effective technique is to ask questions. For instance, instead of telling a student there is no "mood" to his playing, ask him what mood he is trying to create. As with awareness language, this technique allows the student to learn not only what he needs to do, but equally important, what happens if he neglects to do it. During this transitional stage, the role of the student in the learning process becomes increasingly important. For the serious student, the ten-percent level of responsibility of the fundamental stage will grow to ninety percent by the end of the transitional stage. The less talented or motivated students may not reach this level, but any increase in responsibility will only serve to further their development.

The teacher's role also changes during the transitional stage. Since students are developing and expanding many diverse skills, it is important to remember that teachers generally focus on what they themselves do well. It is important that we, as teachers, work on our own weaknesses so we don't pass them on to our students. This is particularly important because many of the teaching materials used in this stage provide little or no guidance to the teacher. It becomes increasingly important for the teacher of the transitional and advanced student to be constantly growing as a guitarist, musician, and teacher/performer. Reading professional journals and attending symposia, workshops, and master classes are just some of the ways to continue to grow.

The objectives for the transitional stage continue to be centered on the same six areas previously discussed in Part I. They are:

- Technique
- Rhythm
- Daily Practice
- Theory
- Interpretation
- Performance

Now, however, we will be refining the skills and broadening the knowledge learned in the fundamental stage.

TECHNIQUE

While it would be nice to think that the student has mastered all the elements taught in the fundamental stage, anyone with teaching experience

knows that nothing could be further from the truth. The fundamental stage provides the basic foundation for continued growth. The foundation must be constantly reinforced for this to occur. A student may have an intellectual understanding of the importance of alternating fingers by the end of the developmental stage but will need continual reinforcement of this technique to use it during the transitional stage. A ten-year old with a perfect sitting and hand position developed during the fundamental stage will need to make adjustments to this position as he grows. As obvious as these points may seem, they are easily overlooked by the teacher working to develop repertoire, musicianship, and other skills. The following is a list of what I feel is important during the transitional stage:

1. Refine fundamental skills.
2. Learn free stroke scales. (Depending on the student's abilities, this may have been introduced in the fundamental stage.)
3. Learn two and three octave major and minor scales.
4. Work on scale studies.
5. Develop im, ia, ma, ami, & im combinations in major and minor scales (both free and rest stroke).
6. Develop tone.
7. Develop accuracy.
8. Develop speed.
9. Work on advanced arpeggios & on tremolo.
10. Develop harmonic, pizzicato, and rasqueado techniques.
11. Learn the entire fingerboard.
12. Continue to develop critical listening.
13. Select appropriate repertoire to reinforce technical and musical development.
14. Develop performance skills (i.e., memorization, program planning etc.)

Some resource materials for the above may be found in method books, but much must be introduced and taught using supplemental material. The following is a list of frequently used supplemental material. It is by no means complete. I apologize to the authors for some excellent materials I may have omitted.

Scales and Arpeggios:

Aguado, D. New Guitar Method, Tecla Editions.

Bogdanovic, D. Polyrhythmic and Polymetric Studies, Edizioni Musicali Berben.

Carcassi, M. Twenty Five Melodic Studies ,Op 60, Editions Zerboni.

Carlevaro, A. Serie Didactica Para Guitarra, Volumes 1 -4, Barry Editorial.

Chiesa, R. Technical Fundamentals, Volumes 1-3, Editions Zerboni.
Coste, N. 43 Studies, Editions Zerboni.
Giuliani, M. Studi per Chitarra, Editions Zerboni. _____.
Studio per la Chitarra, Op 1, Tecla.
Iznaola, R. Kitharologus: The Path to Virtuosity, Editions
Chanterelle.
Noad, F. 100 Graded Classical Guitar Studies, Amsco Publications.
Pujol, E. Guitar School, Volumes 1-4, Editions Orphee.
Provost, R. Guitar Technique ,Volumes 1-3, Professional Guitar
Publications.
Savio, I. Daily Technique and Velocity Exercises, Guitar Solo
Publications.
Shearer, A. Slur Ornamentation & Reach Development Exercises,
Belwin Mills.
_____. Scale Patterns for Guitar, Belwin Mills
Segovia, A. Diatonic Major and Minor Scales, Columbia Music.
_____. Slur Exercises and Chromatic Octaves, Columbia Music
Sor, F. Complete Studies, Lessons, and Exercises for Guitar, Tecla.
Stover, R. The Classic Arpeggio Book, Guitar Solo Publications.
Tarrega, F. Complete Technical Studies, Universal Editions

RHYTHM

The rhythmic skills introduced in the fundamental stage must now be reinforced and refined. It is easy, when teaching students at this level, to overlook rhythmic development. Serious high school students may be playing solo pieces at an otherwise good level with only a few rhythmic, easily correctable errors. They are preparing to audition for a college music program with attention focused on this important step. These appear to be good reasons to back off from working on rhythmic studies, sight-reading materials, or duets. But are we really helping the student when we do this?

Anyone teaching at the college level will agree that rhythmic skills are the least developed skill in the entering college guitar student. This student is often rhythmically not equipped to function in an ensemble setting. To better prepare the transitional student, we need to place rhythmic development on the same level as technical and repertoire development. Students at this level should be developing skills in reading all rhythms including triplets. In addition, they should be learning to play pieces written in compound and changing meters. This can be accomplished by playing duos, trios, and chamber music. The following are some of the materials that my students have found helpful.

Bower, B. Bop Duets, Vol. 1-3, Charles Colin.

Dodgson/Quine. Progressive Reading For Guitarists, Ricordi.

_____. At Sight, Sixty Sight Reading Exercises For Guitar, Ricordi. _____ 12 Transitional Studies, Ricordi.
Gariboldi, A. Six Little Duets Op. 145, Cundy-Bettoney.
Kessner, D. Array, Belwin Mills
Learn to Play Flute Duets, Bk. 1, Ed. Eisenhauer, Alfred Publishing.
Rubank. Selected Duets, Vol. 1 for Clarinet.
Rubank #13.
Starer, R. Rhythmic Training, MCA Music Pub.
Think Easy Duets, for Two Flutes, Edited L. Moyse, McGinnis & Marx.
Appropriate guitar duos and trios from all musical periods.

DAILY PRACTICE

In the transitional stage, practicing needs to become more focused, efficient, and creative. The pieces for transitional students are longer and contain more than the one or two technical problems found in the music of the fundamental stage. As the pieces increase in length, they also increase in musical and technical complexity. Students in this stage need to learn to identify problems, drill difficult areas immediately, acquire a broader knowledge of music, and develop strong memorization skills, to mention just a few of the areas. The teacher needs to encourage students to develop a strong foundation in these and other areas. I have found the following books to be helpful to both the teacher and student:

Iznaola, R. On Practicing, Chanterelle #738.
Provost, R. The Art & Technique of Practice, GSP
Snitkin, H. R. Practicing for Young Musicians, HMS Pub.

THEORY

As we all know, theory is the subject students either love or hate. As guitar teachers, the easy path would be to assign responsibility for learning theory to the student and theory teacher. Unfortunately, the quality of our playing is related to our knowledge and understanding of music theory; therefore, we cannot sit back and let someone else do it. The amount of theory to be taught is not the same for each student. The following examples offer some suggestions:

1. In general, always plan repertoire far enough ahead of your student's progress to anticipate the theory needed to play the next piece. If you're planning to teach the "Bourrée in E minor" from the first lute suite of J.S. Bach, your student should know:

AB form. How to mark phrases. The key of the piece. Enough about counterpoint to be able to recognize imitation and sequences.

2. If the student is preparing for an audition to enter a music school, the student must know key signatures, major and minor scales, intervals, and

at least major, minor, augmented, and diminished triads. The teacher needs to include this information into the weekly lesson or direct the student to a qualified theory teacher.

3. Adults generally require enough theory to feel intellectually comfortable with the music they are studying. Some are motivated to become really involved with music theory and history while others want just enough to satisfy their curiosity. Again, this can be part of the weekly lesson or taught by a qualified theory teacher.

I would teach theory gradually. In the fundamental stage, I would have taught the student key signatures and major and minor scales. Now, one week I might explain about form, the next, counterpoint. All, of course, would depend on the age, interest, and intelligence of the student. By planning, I could gradually prepare the student for the next piece not only technically but musically. I have found that this approach promotes enthusiasm for learning. It also fosters a healthy relationship between theory and the guitar, further developing the student's intellectual and musical understanding.

If you are fortunate enough to be teaching for an organization that offers theory classes, you possibly won't have to do any of this work. My experience, however, has been that students with such full schedules often don't have extra time to take these classes.

The following are theory texts that can be used in the transitional stage.

Bye, D. Theory and Harmony for Everyone, Mel Bay Publications.

Clough, J & Conley, J. Basic Harmonic Progressions, Norton.

Curtis, W. First Steps to Ear Training, Hal Leonard Publications.

Duarte, J. Melody & Harmony for Guitarists, Universal Editions.

----- . Every Musicians Handbook, Amsco Publications.

Hamerik, A. The Musicians Theory Book, Carousel Publications.

Hindemith, P. Traditional Harmony, Bks. 1 & 2, Schott.

Lilienfield & Cimino. The Guitarists Theory Guide, Belwin Mills.

Piston, W. Harmony, Norton.

INTERPRETATION

I believe that teaching of interpretation must be considered equal to the teaching of technique and repertoire for a student to complete the transition stage. Looking at other instrumentalists, we find that the self-actuating student not only can learn and play pieces well independently, but also possesses sufficient knowledge to interpret the music. If guitarists are to reach this level, they must be taught the same interpretative skills as other instrumentalists. I feel students in this stage must acquire the following knowledge:

1. Various interpretative techniques needed to play complex phrases.

2. Performance of music written in the following forms: Suite, Sonata, Theme and Variations.
3. The study of twentieth century music.
4. The study of ornamentation used in all periods as it relates to the guitar.
5. The study of different musical styles.
6. The study of various types of expressive playing (e.g., drama, character, mood, etc.)
7. Appropriate classical music for all instruments, not only classical guitar recordings.

Suggested Materials:

Donnington, R. *The Interpretation of Early Music*, Faber.

Goldspiel, A. *Issues in Contemporary Analysis and the Solo Guitar Music of Heitor Villa-Lobos*, DMA Thesis, Hartt School, 1994.

Heck, T. *The Birth of the Classic Guitar and its Cultivation in Vienna as Reflected in the Career and Compositions of Mauro Giuliani*, UMI Press.

Keller, H. *Phrasing & Articulation*, Norton.

Neumann, F. *Essays in Performance Practice*, UMI Press.

_____. *Ornamentation in Baroque & Post-Baroque Music*, Princeton.

Santos, T. *Heitor Villa-Lobos and the Guitar*, Wise Owl Music.

Schneider, J. *The Contemporary Guitar*, Berkeley Press.

PERFORMANCE

If you believe that performance is a skill which can be developed, then the transitional stage is the most important. During the fundamental stage, performance development essentially focused on building the student's confidence. For confidence to continue to grow, the student and teacher must work to integrate into the student's performance the practice, memorization, and interpretative skills being developed during the transitional stage. I have found that many of the performance problems encountered by students in this stage are a result of lack of, or poor integration of these skills.

Another set of problems that occurs during this stage is the emergence of the student's musical personality. The emergence and development of this personality is extremely important if the student is to continue to grow. This personality development may cause the student to try to achieve more than is realistically possible for his level. It may also cause the student to "play safe" and only concentrate on hitting the notes rather than making music. In either situation, the student's self-confidence begins to suffer. Questions arise concerning his reasons for studying an instrument, whether music is a viable career option, or whether he will ever be able to perform a piece to his

satisfaction. The teacher must assist the student in working through these issues if his musical personality is to emerge. One of the best ways I have found is for the teacher to share personal experiences relating to these subjects. Another way is to encourage students to audit area master classes. Often these classes have a question and answer period in which the student can not only ask questions but, more importantly, discover that other players have similar issues.

The teacher's role is also to continue selecting the performance venues for the student. As the student progresses and gains confidence and experience, he will gradually be able to take on a greater role in selecting the performance venue. Entering the transitional stage, performances consisted of recitals performed by students at the same stage of development. As the confidence and integration of related skills develop, the student may be ready to perform in programs with more advanced transitional players.

Ultimately, as the student's skills and confidence continue to develop, he may choose to perform for musical clubs, music societies, (e.g., guitar societies, etc.), restaurants or full-length solo recitals. The progress must be gradual with as few negative experiences as possible.

As part of developing a student's performance skill, I would urge the teacher to focus on helping the student:

1. Apply the current practice and interpretative skills to performance.
2. Identify and correct weaknesses found in his performance.
3. Identify and develop his strengths.
4. Develop a positive attitude towards performance.
5. Share his love of music with the audience.

Students who have successfully learned the suggested material for the transitional stage will find themselves ready to assume an independent musical role. They will have the confidence and skills necessary to enjoy a musical life either as a serious amateur or professional musician.

III. Self Actuating Stage (Advanced)

Many of you may think that the self-actuating stage is reserved only for those students aspiring to professional careers in music. While currently the majority of guitarists in this stage are aspiring or professional guitarists, this need not be the case. The self-actuating stage is reserved for players who can musically and technically function at a reasonably high level without needing weekly lessons. Returning to my observations at the beginning of this article, I noted that there are numbers of highly qualified amateurs playing other instruments who function independently in various musical groups. My belief is that students who have been seriously studying an

instrument for more than three years should be able to function independently at that level. They may not be able to play more challenging pieces or develop more advanced techniques on their own (even though some can); however, they can learn new music and perform at their current level, independent of a teacher. Professionals or aspiring professionals, on the other hand, should be able to solve their technical problems and grow to their full musical potential. If they can do this, what then is the role of the teacher at this stage? Before answering this question, let us look at the difference between a self-actuating amateur and a professional. The self-actuating amateur, for a variety of reasons, reached a point in the transitional stage where he stopped studying. He either continues to play or returns to playing the guitar at another time in his life. If he chooses to return to the study of the guitar, he usually returns at the level he left, transitional. Depending on his talent, independent work, and previous training, he may return as a self-actuating student.

The role of the teacher for the self-actuating student (amateur, aspiring, or professional guitarist) is that of a coach. This closely parallels the roles of sport coaches who work with professional athletes to help maximize their talents. A Masters student in performance is expected to bring in a higher level of completed independent work than an undergraduate. Likewise, a DMA candidate must function independently at still a higher level than the Masters student. People in these programs are capable of learning music on their own. They bring to the lesson their thoughts and ideas about the music being studied. The teacher discusses issues that the student may have overlooked or shares their experiences concerning repertoire, performance, or music with the student. While the same six areas of teaching previously discussed still exist, the teacher helps the student find the solution to problems they may encounter during or on the road to a professional career.

TECHNIQUE

If you follow baseball, you know that even the best hitters get into a slump. The role of the batting coach is to help the player regain his batting form. Many of us know of top level performers who have suffered tendonitis, muscle strain, or seemingly lost their well-developed technique. It is not that they have lost their skill or don't know what to do, but often have just missed some basic point that results in a physical problem. The teacher would help the student regain previous skills and/or find the reason for recurring tendonitis or muscle strain.

RHYTHM/THEORY

I would like to think that a player in this stage would possess the necessary theory skills needed to interpret the music he is playing. There

are, however, musical genres in which a performer may not have sufficient experience and which could present problems. Rhythmic modulation and modern notation are two areas that come to mind. Rhythmic modulation that occurs in the chamber works of some contemporary composers may not have been studied or understood. The notational problems found in indeterminate or other avant-garde forms of music might also be something that not every performer would have learned.

DAILY PRACTICE

Practicing as with the other skills used in performing, is constantly evolving. When working with students in this stage, practice issues revolve around practice techniques the teacher has found helpful when learning a particular piece or solving a particular problem. There is more of a dialogue between teacher and student and a sharing of ideas than an imparting of facts or procedures.

INTERPRETATION

As with practicing, a performer's interpretation is constantly evolving. To hear a prominent example of this, one just has to listen to pianist Alicia de Larrocha, long recognized as the major interpreter of Albeniz's piano music. Alicia de Larrocha's two recordings of Albeniz's Suite Espanola., made ten years apart, show her tremendous musical growth and depth of interpretation.

Teachers must personally experience growth and evolution in their own playing and teaching to be of help to their students. This growth must encompass not only interpretative issues but also technical issues that allow a particular musical expression to take form.

PERFORMANCE

Performance issues at this level generally focus on programming, career development, or performance anxiety. Again, the most helpful teachers are ones who are active in the field and have personally experienced and worked through these issues. No, you don't have to suffer from stage-fright to be able to help a student; it is important, however, to have personal performance experiences to share with your students.

FINAL THOUGHTS

As you may have surmised, not every guitar teacher will be capable of teaching students in the self-actuating stage. My belief is that guitar teachers should consider their own personality, preferences, playing, and teaching abilities when deciding which students to teach. For instance, not everyone is able to work with young children, but those who can, receive

great satisfaction from this work. Those who cannot become frustrated and find little, if any, pleasure in teaching. The same is true for teaching teenagers, adults, or performance majors. This situation also exists when working with transitional and self-actuating students. It is important for teachers to recognize their strengths, weaknesses, and preferences.

In this article, I attempted to point out the complex nature of teaching. The teaching profession has many rewards and pleasures, but it also can be equally frustrating and unrewarding. If we work in the areas of our strengths, we will always find joy in teaching and our students will learn. When we ignore these areas, not only will we fail to enjoy teaching, but what is more important, our students will not realize their full musical potential.

Copyright 1997, Richard Provost