

**Elementary Études**  
*for Guitarists in the 21st Century*

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## Études for Guitarists in the 21st Century

This unique set of 30 études draws upon influences from both classical and popular styles of music, depicting the experience of musicians in this current digital era. Through the internet, radio, TV, and my work as a music teacher in a multicultural metropolitan area, I am unceasingly exposed to an enormously large variety of musical styles. As such, in my own mind, it seemed perfectly natural to compose in a way that melded so many different styles together.

As these are études, and intended to carry pedagogical purposes, I might wish to use this opportunity to share my ideas about how they should be performed. Many details of a musical piece are fairly objective and easy to explain: the pitches, rhythms, articulations, etc. I hope that I have succeeded in communicating this information clearly enough in the notation in the score.

What about the ambiguous, yet highly sought advice concerning more subtle facets of musical interpretation: dynamics, tempo fluctuations, tone, fingerings, etc.? I have attempted to notate some suggestions which seemed reasonable to me in the score, but actually, I am not the one to tell you how to perform these études: *you* are the only person who can discover how you should perform them! Whatever do I mean?! I would like to suggest that musical performance should involve the *personal feeling intuition* of the performer.

How can a performer engage his or her *feeling intuition*? To give a few brief pointers, you can start by bringing conscious attention to the centre of your chest (your heart area). Take a few deep breaths, ask your heart how it feels, and silently, spaciouly listen for an answer. Allow it to speak whatever it is trying to speak. Switch off your scrutinizing brain, and remove all critical constraints. You may find that a regular practice of meditation or journalling will help develop your skills in quieting the mind and getting in touch with your feelings. If you can practice connecting to the music with your heart open and freed in this manner, then a genuine and feeling musical interpretation will begin to emerge as you play. I don't know what this is going to be for you, you have to play the music and find out for yourself!

Though it is not often spoken of, I believe that authentic feeling engagement is an absolutely essential part of musical performance. Ask your brain how to understand the objective, technical matters, but ask your heart how to execute the music with feeling. They must ultimately work together; they are *both* valuable sources of information. You might discover different answers on different days, and surely *your* answers will be different than the answers that another performer discovers. In my view, as long as the performer is being sincere, then the performance will be valid and acceptable. Remember: even though I am the composer, my performances of these études embody just one of my own personal interpretations of them. This is the way that musical performance works! It's subjective, it's personal, it's temporary, it's constantly changing, it's something that cannot be documented definitively...

I hope that these will be inspiring and enjoyable pieces of music, and I look forward to hearing your own interpretations of these works, as varied and unique as they all might be.

Michael Bemmels  
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# Elementary Études

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## No. 1 - Light and Shadow

Michael Bemmels

Allegretto

# No. 2 - Dancing on Edge

**Agitato**

*f* m i m i m m m i

5 m i m i 2 3

9 *p* i m i m i i m i i m

13 m i m i m i m i m

17 i m i m i m i m

21 *p* a i m a a i a 4 m 2 3 1

25 *f* m i

29 1 2 1 *p*

Detailed description: This musical score is for a piece titled "No. 2 - Dancing on Edge" in 3/4 time. It is marked "Agitato" and begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes, with some triplets. Dynamics vary throughout, including piano (*p*) and sforzando (*sf*). The piece concludes with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a final chord.

## No. 3 - Sierra Trail

## Ritmico

The musical score is written in 4/4 time and consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a **f** dynamic and includes slurs and accents over the notes. The lyrics "i m a" are written above the first two measures. The second staff starts at measure 5 and includes a circled cross symbol (⊕) above the staff. The third staff starts at measure 9 and includes a **mp** dynamic. The fourth staff starts at measure 13 and includes the instruction *D.C. al Coda*. The fifth staff starts at measure 17 and includes a circled cross symbol (⊕) above the staff and a **rit.** dynamic. The score uses various guitar-specific notations, including slurs, accents, and fingerings (0, 1, 2, 3, i).

\*Slap the string with the right-hand thumb

# No. 4 - Midnight Belfry

Andante sostenuto

1. m i m i a m i m i m i a

*mp*

4. 1. m i i i i i i i i i i i

*p p mf p p p p p p*

*Fine*

7. 1. 2.

*p*

*D.C. al Fine*

# No. 5 - A Meadow's Sunrise

Andantino

1. i a m i m i i

*mp p*

6. m i m i

1. m i 2. m i

*p*

*Fine*

9. a m a m a m i

1. 2. 3. 4.

*mf p*

14. i m i m i

1. m i a 2. m i i

*p mp*

*D.S. al Fine*

## No. 6 - Mist and Flames

Allegretto

*p*

*p*

*p*

*p*

*mp*

*ff con fuoco*

Play 8 times

\*Slap the string with the right-hand thumb

## No. 7 - With Friends of Old

Moderato

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

*D.C. tutto*

## No. 8 - Frolic and Jest

Giocoso

1 4 2 2 *mf* m i m i m

3 2 3 1 2 0 1 *legato* m i m a i m i m

2 m i a m i 3 2 0 1 *p mp p* m i m m

*legato* i m m i m i m i m

*p* i m m i m i m

*p legato* i m m i m i m



# No. 9 - An Embrace, a Farewell

Andante espressivo

**System 1:**  
Guit. 1: *mp* m i m m i  
Guit. 2: *mp* p i m i i m i

**System 2 (Measures 5-8):**  
Guit. 1: m i m i  
Guit. 2: p

**System 3 (Measures 9-12):**  
Guit. 1: *f* i m 3 4 i m  
Guit. 2: *f* p i m i m i m i i m i m i i

**System 4 (Measures 13-16):**  
Guit. 1: 1 i m 3 0 1 0 1 i m  
Guit. 2: #

**System 5 (Measures 17-20):**  
Guit. 1: *mp* m i  
Guit. 2: *mp* 1 2 p

## No. 10 - Fiesta

Allegro energico

Guit. 1

*hand clap*

*ff*

Guit. 2

*ff* *tamb.*

5

*mf*

*mf*

9

*mp*

*mp*

13

*mp*

*mp*

\* Slap the string with the right-hand thumb

17 m i

21 m i

*D.S. con ripetizione,  
poi la Coda*

a  
i

⊕ Coda

25