

GUITAR LESSON 20: DYNAMICS, RHYTHM NOTATION IN TABLATURE, AND HARMONIC MINOR*

Catherine Schmidt-Jones

This work is produced by OpenStax-CNX and licensed under the
Creative Commons Attribution License 2.0[†]

Abstract

Introduces dynamic markings, playing at different dynamic levels, harmonic minor scales, and common methods for notating rhythms in guitar tablature.

Please see Guitar Lesson 1¹ for notes about this course. Here are PDF files of the Lesson Page², the Home Practice Page³, and the Ensemble Page⁴ for this lesson. The Song Sheet⁵ is the same as for lessons 18 and 19.

*Version 1.3: Aug 15, 2009 4:11 pm -0500

[†]<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>

¹"Guitar Lesson 1: The High E String, and Introduction to Notations" <<http://cnx.org/content/m12663/latest/>>

²See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m13091/latest/20GuitarLesson.pdf>>

³See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m13091/latest/20GuitarPractice.pdf>>


⁴See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m13091/latest/Ensemble16.pdf>>


⁵See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m13091/latest/SongSheet10.pdf>>

Lesson 20

Common Notation

Dynamic markings tell you how loudly or softly to play. **Dynamics** are often not marked in guitar parts, but you should start practicing playing loudly and softly as appropriate in your music.

 or **cresc.** ("crescendo") gradually louder

 or **dim.** ("diminuendo") gradually softer

ff ("fortissimo") very loud

f ("forte") loud

mf ("mezzoforte") medium loud

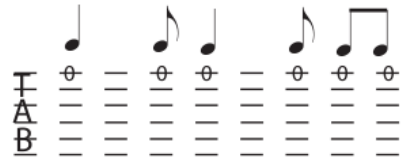
mp ("mezzopiano") medium soft

p ("piano") soft

pp ("pianissimo") very soft

Tablature

Some tablature notations use dashed lines to help indicate more complex rhythms. You can usually read these by assuming that each dash represents an eighth note.



Music Theory for Guitar

Because it has a strong feeling of being "in the key" and of "leading to the i chord", the **major V and V7** chords are very common in both major and minor keys. In minor keys, this requires an accidental, on the seventh note of the scale. Because it is so useful for harmony, this version of the minor scale is called the **harmonic minor**. **This particular accidental is another clue that a piece is in the minor key.**

A harmonic minor scale and chords



D harmonic minor scale and chords



E harmonic minor scale and chords



*learn more about dynamics: <http://cnx.org/content/m11649/latest/>

 Catherine Schmidt-Jones
<http://cnx.org/>

Figure 1

Song Sheet 10

Enjoy Life (Lesson 18)

Musical score for 'Enjoy Life' in G major, 3/4 time. The score consists of two staves. The first staff contains the main melody with a triplet of eighth notes and a dotted quarter note. The second staff contains the bass line with a triplet of eighth notes and a dotted quarter note. The piece concludes with a first ending and a second ending.

V'la L'bon Vent (Lesson 19)

Musical score for 'V'la L'bon Vent' in G major, 2/4 time. The score consists of two staves. The first staff contains the main melody with eighth and sixteenth notes. The second staff contains the bass line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The piece concludes with a first ending and a second ending.

Adeste Fideles (Lesson 20)

Musical score for 'Adeste Fideles' in G major, 4/4 time. The score consists of four staves. The first staff contains the main melody with a dynamic marking of *mf*. The second staff contains the bass line with a dynamic marking of *mf*. The third staff contains the main melody with a dynamic marking of *p* and a dynamic marking of *f*. The fourth staff contains the bass line with a dynamic marking of *f*. The piece concludes with a first ending and a second ending.

Figure 3

Ensembles 16

Sidewalks of New York (Lesson 20)

Listen to the balance between the parts.

The first guitar, on the melody, should always be louder, except when the second guitar has the "more interesting" part.

The musical score is written for two guitars in 3/4 time. The first system shows the beginning with a first guitar part starting on a treble clef and a second guitar part on a bass clef. Dynamics include *f* (forte) and *mf* (mezzo-forte). The second system includes a first ending bracket labeled "1.". The third system includes a second ending bracket labeled "2.". The score concludes with a final chord in the first system of the fourth system.

Figure 4