

Beatles For Classical Guitar User's Guide



Through the years, I have received many comments, questions (and occasionally even a few compliments!) from guitarists regarding the arrangements in *Beatles for Classical Guitar* I always enjoy and appreciate reading these comments, and they have prompted me to create this page. It is designed to serve as user's guide for people who own the book. I hope it is useful to you - I just wish I had read this page before I recorded the book!

The first section contains suggestions and tips on fingerings that I've tweaked through the years. These changes have come mostly from my own repeated laboring over difficult passages (or just as likely from watching a student struggle with them) and then suddenly realizing there is a better way. And for those with an interest in arranging, I have included a few comments on the arranging process involved with some of the songs. Finally, there are several links to YouTube performances of these arrangements. At this point, over half of the arrangements have been posted on YouTube, and some of them by more than one guitarist.

The next section is a list of errors that unfortunately will probably never be fixed.

Finally, is a (probably not completely accurate, but maybe somewhat helpful) suggested order of difficulty.

1. Notes, Fingering Tips, and Suggestions

1. "Across the Universe": This arrangement worked well in D major, the same key as the Beatles' version. The introduction is straight from the recording, except the 2nd and 3rd measures, which were strummed. Also, I substituted D major 7th for the B minor which the Beatles used on the third beat of the 4th measure. For any Beatle purists, it would be easy put the B minor chord back in simply by using a 7th fret bar at that point. On page 5, the big shifts are the challenge. Try using the little finger on the "G" at the end of line 2; the fingering on the barred A7 will be a little odd, but using the 4th finger as a guide finger makes the shift much easier. Similarly, at the end of line 3 the "F#" and "D" can be fingered with the 2nd and 3rd fingers so the 3rd finger will be a guide finger. Note that with that fingering the half bar is not necessary.

2. "Ask Me Why": This arrangement follows the Beatles' version fairly literally. It is transposed from the key of E

major to A major because I felt it worked better as a guitar solo in that key.

3. “Come Together”: The original was in D minor. My arrangement is up one whole step, in E minor. The top of page 2, which is the keyboard solo on the recording, is probably the most difficult passage. You might try using the thumb for both of the bass notes. One of my students used that technique and it works very well. Salt Lake City Guitarist Michael Lucarelli has recorded a great version of this arrangement as well as six others from this book in his CD “Michael Lucarelli plays the Beatles”.

4. “Cry Baby Cry”: This arrangement is also in the same key as the Beatles’ version - G Major. At the beginning of the 4th line, the “D” in the bass could also be played open, without the bar.

5. “Day Tripper”: This is basically the Beatles’ guitar riff with the vocal melody on top. It is in the original key of E major.

6. “For No One”: This is one of the first Beatle tunes I arranged for guitar. The original was in B major, not one of my personal favorite keys for classical guitar! It works much better in G major. The syncopation is probably the trickiest part. By the way, Guitarist Eduardo Diaz has posted a very good version of this arrangement and several others from this book on YouTube. Here is a link: “[For No One](#)”

7. “From Me To You”: This tune is transposed up a step from the original C major, and I’ve also added a harmony part in sixths to the introductory melody.

8. “Hello, Goodbye”: This arrangement is fairly difficult. In fact, I think it might be the most difficult arrangement in the book. There’s a lot going on between the vocal, the bass, and the occasional guitar licks thrown in for good measure. The original version was in C major, here it is in E major. One thing that sometimes confuses students in this arrangement is the 1st beat of line 4, measure 2 - all four notes (including the 4th string E) should be played together on the 1st beat. Eduardo Diaz has also recorded an excellent version of this arrangement on YouTube: “[Hello, Goodbye](#)”

9. “Here Comes the Sun”: I think this is actually the very first Beatle song I ever arranged. If you would like to play http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rb_Iz3gioqY this song in the same key as the Beatles, use a capo at the 7th fret - that’s what they did. I personally don’t like it

quite that high when played as a solo. Eduardo Diaz capos his guitar at the 4th fret on his YouTube version: “[Here Comes the Sun](#)”.

10. “I Don’t Want to Spoil the Party”: This arrangement is in the Beatles’ original of key, G major. The top two treble notes, starting at line 3, measure 2, are a literal transcription of the vocal harmony.

11. “I Will”: This beautiful song was originally in F major. Here it is in the more “guitar friendly” key of A major. The only fingering change I’ve made since the book was released is that it is now my preference to play the C# minor chord in line 4, measure 1 in 1st position, with the 4th finger on the 5th string C#, 1st finger on G#, and 2nd on the high C#. On the “[Performances](#)” page, there is an mp3 of me playing this version of “I Will”

12. “I’ll Follow the Sun”: This is another song that practically arranged itself. It is in C major, the same as the Beatles’ recording. Here is Eduardo Diaz playing this arrangement on YouTube: “[I’ll Follow the Sun](#)”.

13. “I’m a Loser”: In this arrangement I took a little liberty with the bass line. In fact, it has nothing to do with what the Beatles played, but I think it works very well. It is important to play the song with “swing eighths” (see “Errors that Snuck Through”). The top half of page 29 is the harmonica solo and the bottom half is the guitar solo. The original was in G major, this arrangement is in D major, using dropped D tuning. Here is good rendition of this tune on YouTube by a guitarist named Tim: “[I’m a Loser](#)”.

14. “I’m Happy Just to Dance with You”: This is one of my personal favorites in the book. Here are some tips to make it more playable: on page 30, line 3, measure 3 play the last of the four “A”s with the 2nd finger to make the shift to the F#m7 much easier. Similarly, on page 30, line 5, measure 1 use the 4th finger on the 4th high “D” to make the change to the Em7 easier. Originally the song was in C# minor/E major, here it is down a whole step to B minor/D major. Here is a great version of this arrangement of “[I’m Happy Just to Dance with You](#)” complete with percussion played by Art “Arturo” Carnic.

15. “I’m Only Sleeping”: Originally in Eb minor (it was probably played in Em and tuned down), here it is in B minor. On page 32, line 1, measure 2 you can play the “B” on the 2nd half of the 3rd beat as an open string. This will make the shift much easier and smoother (of course, to do this you will have to lift the bar a little early). Also,

the stem down notes in the 1st and 2nd endings are a direct transcription of the bass guitar part. If you use pizzicato on them they will sound a little more “bass guitarish”.

16. “I’m so Tired”: This is an admittedly odd choice for a classical guitar solo, but I think it works very well! Its in the same key as the Beatles version, A major. I added a harmony part to fill it out a little.

17. “In My Life”: Again, the same key as the original, A major. The lead guitar, vocal and vocal harmonies, as well as harpsichord part are all straight from the recording although the ending to the harpsichord solo is a bit simplified. Modesto de Renzio has recorded a very nice version of [In My Life](#) on YouTube.

18. “The Long and Winding Road”: This is one of the easier arrangements in the book - it wouldn’t be though, if it were in the original key of Eb major! The most difficult section is the short middle section starting with the 2nd measure of the fifth line. The bottom part is a transcription of the violin counter melody to the vocal. It is unfortunately down an octave, which I’ve never been entirely happy about. One tip to make things easier is to play the 2nd measure of the 5th line the same as the 2nd measure of the 6th line, using an open 1st string “E”. Guitarist Hiroshi Kishimine has recorded a very good version of this arrangement of [The Long and Winding Road](#) on YouTube.

19. “Maxwell’s Silver Hammer”: The original was in D major. I have arranged it in G major, using dropped D tuning. I also added a few harmony lines.

20. “No Reply”: This arrangement is in the same key as the Beatles version, C major. It has an added introduction that sets up a Latin feel.

21. “Nowhere Man”: For me, one of the most endearing characteristics of the Beatles’ music was their wonderful three-part vocal harmony, which can sometimes be a challenge to make work in a solo guitar arrangement. In this case, my solution was to move the melody to the top voice from the middle voice, where it is in the Beatles’ version. After the double bar on page 44, the harmony parts are implied by the accompaniment. The song is transposed from A major from E major.

22. “P.S. I Love You”: This song was originally in A major. This arrangement is transposed to D major. For the right effect, every note should ring as long as possible. On page 46, line 4, measure 3 try releasing the bar early and using the 4th finger on the last F# in the measure. This will make the melody line smoother. On page 47, line 3, measure 2 a better fingering is to use the little finger as a guide finger and play the “A” on the 1st beat on the second string. Then, you can use the open first string for the “E”. Of course, the half bar is not necessary with this fingering.

23. “Penny Lane”: Originally in B major, this song works much better as a guitar solo in E major. But even in this key it is still challenging to play the bass line along with the melody. You can listen to Eduardo Diaz’s version of this arrangement on “YouTube: [Penny Lane](#)”.

24. “This Boy”: This was another three part vocal harmony arranging challenge. In this case I stayed with the original key of D major. The melody was the lowest voice in the Beatles’ version. To make it work better as a guitar solo, I moved the melody to the highest voice. One playing tip is on page 51, line 2, measure 2: play the “F#” and “D” in the top voice with the 3rd and 4th fingers, and leave the 2nd finger on “C#”.

25. “Something”: Again this arrangement is in the same key as the original, and is an arrangement that practically wrote itself.

26. “Things We Said Today”: The original song was in A minor, here it is in D minor, with dropped D tuning. This arrangement has a more syncopated feel than the Beatles’ version. I have also added some harmonies.

27. “Two of Us”: The Beatles’ version was in G major, and this arrangement is in D major, using dropped D tuning. The opening guitar riff is straight from the recording, but transposed down, of course. This arrangement would be fairly easy if it weren’t for the odd fingering in the 1st and 2nd measures of the 5th line on page 57. The change of fingers on the “E” in the bass is to keep things flowing smoothly in the melody. One suggestion to make this passage a little easier is to play the “E” on the 4th beat of the 1st measure on the open 1st string instead of the 3rd string as it is written.

28. “While My Guitar Gently Weeps”: This is another one of the very first Beatle songs I arranged. The first section is the piano introduction played down an octave. It’s in the same key as the original, and follows it closely except for the ending (its very difficult write a fade out into an arrangement!) One fingering suggestion is on page

58, line 4, measures 1 and 2: leave the 3rd finger on the very last “A” in measure 1, use the 1st finger for the next “F#” in the bass, and leave the 2nd finger on the “E” in the bass.

29. “Yesterday”: The original was in F major. This arrangement is straight forward, and is in C major. You can listen to Hiroshi Kishimine’s version of this arrangement on YouTube: [Yesterday](#).

30. “You’re Going to Lose that Girl”: I always liked the odd “up a minor third” key change on this song. It was originally in E major, but I thought that A major was a better key for solo guitar. This puts the bridge in the key of C major. To make the arrangement a little more playable, you might consider dropping the last “A” in the bass at the end of the 1st line, and the same “A” at the end of the 5th line, both on page 62. Also, on page 63, line 1, measure 2, try using the open 1st string for the last “E” - this will make the shift to 1st position smoother. Here is a link to my own version of this arrangement on YouTube: [You’re Going to Lose that Girl](#).

2. Errors That Snuck Through

1. “Come Together”, page 8, line 6, measures 1 & 2 - tie missing
2. “Hello, Goodbye”, page 19, line 4, measure 1 - tie missing.
3. “I’m a Loser”, page 28 - I’m a Loser should be marked “swing eighths”
4. “In My Life”, page 37, line 2, measure 2 - mordent fingering is wrong.
5. “Nowhere Man”, page 44, line 2, measure 1 - fingering on beat two is wrong.
6. “Nowhere Man”, page 45, line 6, measure 1 - tie missing
7. In general there are a few misplaced left and right hand fingerings throughout the book. This was due to working with a primitive 1988 music software program. Hopefully, these are all obvious mistakes.

3. Suggested Order of Difficulty

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| 1. I’ll Follow the Sun | 16. I Will |
| 2. Here Comes the Sun | 17. I’m a Loser |
| 3. Something | 18. Maxwell’s Silver Hammer |
| 4. The Long and Winding Road | 19. In My Life |
| 5. I Don’t Want to Spoil the Party | 20. This Boy |
| 6. While My Guitar Gently Weeps | 21. Things We Said Today |
| 7. For No One | 22. Come Together |
| 8. No Reply | 23. I’m Only Sleeping |
| 9. Ask Me Why | 24. I’m So Tired |
| 10. Nowhere Man | 25. I’m Happy Just to Dance With You |
| 11. Across the Universe | 26. You’re Going to Lose That Girl |
| 12. Cry Baby Cry | 27. Day Tripper |
| 13. From Me to You | 28. Two of Us |
| 14. P.S. I Love You | 29. Penny Lane |
| 15. Yesterday | 30. Hello, Goodbye |

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