

“Ten Trios for Beginning Guitarists”

Facts and Overview

Written by RG Rhoades

TEN IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT THE “TEN TRIOS FOR BEGINNING GUITARISTS”

These ten short trios for guitar ensemble offer an opportunity for group guitar performance that can be introduced at the very first lesson! Participating in “real” music-making acts a reward for the student - they are immediately able to apply skills learned in lessons to performance. This positive experience also acts as an incentive to learn more, so the student can play more music.

The following are ten facts about the “TEN TRIOS FOR BEGINNING GUITARISTS” that set this material apart from all other beginning guitar ensemble literature.

1. Trios are playable as solos!
By far, this is the most original aspect of the collection. Creating music in this format enables the trios to be performed, without compromise, by 1, 2, 3 or more performers, affording an unprecedented level of flexibility.
2. Carefully selected note range
In all but one trio the Guitar 3 part uses two or three of the open bass strings. In several pieces, the Guitar 1 and 2 parts require the performer to play only 3 notes found on a single string. This allows the novice guitarist to immediately participate in making music with a group – a rewarding and motivating experience.
3. Not all meters are common time
To add variety a selection in 3/4 meter has been included.
4. Contemporary sonority
Beginner repertoire frequently suffers from being predictable, harmonically limited and mundane. These trios have been carefully crafted to have an original, interesting and modern tonal palette.
5. Special attention to editing aids both students and teacher
Much effort has been placed into determining what information to include and how to present it. Each note is identified one time in each trio using the traditional string number and fingering symbols. The purpose is two-fold. One, to provide the student with an immediate reference to note fingering in the music and secondly, to provide the instructor with an easy means of quickly identifying the notes used within a particular part.
6. Rhythmically rudimental
No rhythms requiring the subdivision of the beat have been used. Whole, half and quarter rests have also been included. Within this framework many interesting rhythmic structures are possible including contrapuntal rhythms that add much interest to the music and create the demand for students to count independently.

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7. Limited use of accidentals
The pitches F# and C# (on strings 1 and 2 respectively) are easily accessible to the beginning student. Adding these notes provides benefits to the student in the areas of dexterity and technique (expanding the use of the 2nd finger beyond the 3rd string “A” where it is typically first introduced), music theory (understanding the purpose of a sharp and its impact on the sound and fingering of a note) and allows for expanded harmonic possibilities (such as an A major pentatonic scale)
8. Range of tempi
Simple music does not have to be played slowly. Through the use of limited and repetitive fingering patterns students can learn an easy part that, through practice, may be played at a brisk tempo for performance.
9. Dynamics
The guitar has a subtle dynamic range in comparison with many other instruments, but this doesn’t excuse the guitarist from being made aware of and sensitive to the dynamics of music. To educate the students in this area each selection includes dynamic markings.
10. Titles with a purpose
Imaginative titles have been selected to help the director and performers identify the feelings to be communicated by the music.

This collection of ten musical compositions entitled “Ten Trios for Beginning Guitarists” represents a fresh, interesting and exciting addition to beginner-level guitar ensemble repertoire. Designed using simple rhythms, repetitive fingering patterns, short musical phrases, and a limited note range, the individual parts of each trio are playable by the most novice guitarist, but have a synergistic effect when played together, resulting in a captivating, unique and contemporary soundscape. Each part has been crafted to offer a pedagogical benefit, too. These “Ten Trios for Beginning Guitarists” are certain to provide the instructor, performer, and listener with a rewarding musical experience!

Overview and Helpful Hints -
"Ten Trios for Beginning Guitarists"

Trio 1	Strings	Notes	Fingering Rhythms		Rests	Meter	Dynamics	Other
Pt 1	1st	e f g	0 1 3	W	None	4/4	<i>mf</i>	
Pt 2	2nd	b c d	0 1 3	W	None	4/4	<i>mf</i>	
Pt 3	4th 5th	d a	Open	W/H/Q	None	4/4	<i>mf</i>	

This trio was written as a simple but effective introduction to the whole note rhythm as used to indicate both sound (via the whole notes) and silence (via the whole note res. The students must learn that a rest is a sign of silence, so be sure that the strings are muted during the rests.

Trio 2	Strings	Notes	Fingering Rhythms		Rests	Meter	Dynamics	Other
Pt 1	1st	e f g	0 1 3	Q/H	Q	3/4	<i>mp</i>	rit./a tempo
Pt 2	1st 2nd	b c d e f	0 1 3	H/H.	Q	3/4	<i>mp</i>	rit./a tempo
Pt 3	2nd 3rd	g a b c	0 1 2	H.	None	3/4	<i>mp</i>	rit./a tempo

Be certain that students let the notes ring over one another, as this is necessary to achieve the desired sound for this piece. It may be helpful to instruct the students to imagine that the rain is about to stop (at the ritard) but only for a moment (1 measure) as the rain resumes (at the a tempo).

Trio 3	Strings	Notes	Fingering Rhythms		Rests	Meter	Dynamics	Other
Pt 1	1st	e f g	0 1 3	W/H	Q	4/4	<i>mf</i>	
Pt 2	2nd	b c d	0 1 3	W/H	Q	4/4	<i>mf</i>	
Pt 3	4th 5th 6th	d a e	Open	W	None	4/4	<i>mf</i>	

Note the interplay between Gt 1 and Gt 2 as they trade the melody from phrase to phrase.

Trio 4	Strings	Notes	Fingering Rhythms		Rests	Meter	Dynamics	Other
Pt 1	1st	d e f g	0 1 3	W/H	None	4/4	<i>mf</i>	
Pt 2	2nd	b c d e	0 1 3	W/H	None	4/4	<i>mf</i>	
Pt 3	4th 5th 6th	d a e	Open	W	None	4/4	<i>mf</i>	

As the name implies "Stepping Tones" is largely based on step-wise movement between the notes of a single part. However, between Gt 1 and Gt 2 a variety of intervals, including 3rds, 4ths, tri-tones, and 6ths, can be heard. The long and parallel rhythms coupled with the moderate performance tempo should give students sufficient opportunity to hear these intervals.

Trio 5	Strings	Notes	Fingering Rhythms		Rests	Meter	Dynamics	Other
Pt 1	1st	e f g	0 1 3	W/H./H/Q	W	4/4	<i>mf</i>	
Pt 2	2nd	b c d	0 1 3	W	W/H/Q	4/4	<i>mf</i>	
Pt 3	4th 5th 6th	d a e	Open	W	None	4/4	<i>mf</i>	

Gt 3 provides the rhythmic foundation for this trio. The other guitar parts offer rhythmic variation although unison rhythms between the parts can be found. These measures should be especially powerful.

Trio 6	Strings	Notes	Fingering Rhythms		Rests	Meter	Dynamics	Other
Pt 1	1st 2nd	b c d e f g	0 1 3	W/H./H/Q	H	4/4	<i>mp mf</i>	rit./a tempo
Pt 2	2nd 3rd	g a b c d	0 1 2 3	W/H/Q	H/Q	4/4	<i>mp mf</i>	rit./a tempo
Pt 3	4th 5th 6th	d a e	Open	W/H	W	4/4	<i>mp mf</i>	rit./a tempo

Gt 2 is the highlight of this trio. The melody presented in the beginning is rhythmically delayed or echoed in the B section. This piece offers a great opportunity for you to assess how well the students listen to their parts. See who can guess why this trio is entitled "Echoes of the Past".

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Trio 7	Strings	Notes	Fingering	Rhythms	Rests	Meter	Dynamics	Other
Pt 1	1st	e f g	0 1 3	W/H/Q	H	4/4	mf	rit/a tempo
Pt 2	2nd 3rd	g a b c d	0 1 2 3	W/H/Q	Q	4/4	mf	rit/a tempo
Pt 3	4th 5th 6th	d a e	0pen	W/H	None	4/4	mf	rit/a tempo

This music is reflective and meditative in nature. The rit./a tempo measures add expressiveness to the piece.

Trio 8	Strings	Notes	Fingering	Rhythms	Rests	Meter	Dynamics	Other
Pt 1	1st 2nd	d e f g	0 1 3	W/H/Q	H	4/4	p mp mf f	
Pt 2	2nd 3rd	g a b c d	0 1 2 3	W/Q	Q	4/4	p mp mf f	
Pt 3	4th 5th 6th	d a e	0pen	W/H	None	4/4	p mp mf f	Ties

The upper two voices (Gt 1 and 2) establish an ostinato that is contrasted by a series of differing notes and rhythms in the bass resulting in a constantly changing sound. Dynamics are especially important in this piece as they are used to create the image of something approaching, getting "Closer and Closer".

Trio 9	Strings	Notes	Fingering	Rhythms	Rests	Meter	Dynamics	Other
Pt 1	1st 2nd	b c d e f# g	0 1 2 3	W/H/Q	H	4/4	p mp mf	#/ DC al Fine
Pt 2	2nd 3rd	g a b c d	0 1 2 3	W/H./H/Q	H/Q	4/4	p mp mf	#/ DC al Fine
Pt 3	4th 5th 6th	d a e	0pen	W/H./H/Q	None	4/4	p mp mf	#/ DC al Fine

Rhythmic interplay between the parts adds interest to this music. The Guitar 3 part demands the most attention to counting. The form has been expanded through the use of a DC.

Trio 10	Strings	Notes	Fingering	Rhythms	Rests	Meter	Dynamics	Other
Pt 1	1st 2nd 3rd	a b c# e f#	2	W/Q	W	4/4	mf	#
Pt 2	2nd 3rd	a c#	2	W/H	W/H	4/4	mf	#
Pt 3	5th 6th	a e	0pen	W/H	None	4/4	mf	#

Based on the A major pentatonic scale, this selection is quite unique in that all fingered notes are found at the 2nd fret. This gives the students an opportunity for expanded use of the 2nd finger, and the piece can serve as an introduction to playing in II position, too.