

EXTENDING THE BOUNDARIES OF CLASSICAL AND FLAMENCO GUITAR WITH COMPOSITIONS “THE 3RD MOVEMENT”, “YOUR WAY” AND “BEYOND THE TRIANGLE”

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Abstract

Research Problem: Deviation from Classical Guitar music and Flamenco Guitar music towards Rock, Heavy Metal and Pop music was visible among young generation due to monotone and ridged frameworks followed by those styles.

Hypothesis: Combining the Classical and Flamenco Guitar techniques with introducing extended techniques such as tapping the top board, fret board, and sides of the Guitar to produce different sounds from the tuned boards when composing music provides a new dimension which attracts young audience to Guitar music.

Methodology: Author composed three compositions using extended techniques and alternatively mixing the mellow sounds of Classical Guitar and rough sounds of Flamenco Guitar and presented the compositions to the randomly selected 50 boys and girls between the age 21-27 to obtain the opinion. "The 3rd Movement visualizes the important movement of human life, by using the techniques of rapidly changing rhythm patterns which portray the reality of changing movement of daily flow of activities. Right hand 'p' finger Tremolo on open E and three-stroke rasgueados continue with the tapping on top board with thumb repeating melody note is an extended technique used in this piece to persuade more vigor to evoke feelings. In the second part, normal melody in Classical Guitar form suddenly change with rough three-stroke bresguados ending with right hand four finger nail tapping near the 15th fret of the fret board. Two other compositions are also composed using extended techniques created by the author.

Conclusion: Combining Classical and Flamenco Guitar techniques with innovative extended techniques attracts young people to the Guitar.

Keywords

Classical Guitar, Flamenco Guitar, Playing Styles, Boundaries

Classical Guitar Styles

Classical Guitar style started as a repertoire compiled by twentieth century guitarist such as Miguel Llobet, Regino Sainz and Andres Segovia, building on previous work by Francisco Tarrega. The technique that would be adopted by the classical guitar world was well established by the mid-nineteenth century, codified in the methods of Fernando Sor (1778-1839) and Dionisio Aguado (1784-1849) Ramos Altamira (2005: 38). "Due to the incomparable efforts of Andres Segovia (1893-1987) throughout the 20th century the classical guitar has now gain international recognition as a serious instrument for the perform of Art music" (Braid 2001). The resurgence of Interest in the classical guitar encouraged many composers in South America and Europe from 1920 onwards. They composed some outstanding music which has no become part of the Classical Guitar repertoire (Richard Chapman 2003). "The guitar can function as a

portable culture translator. Its techniques build the relationship among the cultures (Coelho 2006).

Flamenco Guitar Styles

Flamenco guitar developed largely from the tradition of accompanying a repertoire of songs and dancers, especially songs of probably Moorish origin or influence known as "Cante jondo" practice mainly by the gypsy community in Andalusia (Castro 2007,39). Flamenco guitar solos tend to be single movement, with short self-contained melodic phrases known as 'falsetas' separated by improvised rhythmic section. A large and diverse group of song forms, Flamenco was popularized in the mid-1800, at which time dance and guitar accompaniment became standard part of the generation (The Total Flamenco Guitar, by Jonathan Pascual). When playing solo the guitarist must convey the whole atmosphere of Flamenco. The rhythm also becomes stronger and more elaborate to resemble the 'foot-work' of the dancer. (Toque Flamenco by Paco Pena). 'The great and ancient tradition of Flamenco is a broad and deep current formed from many sources (El Arte Flamenco De La Guitarra by Juan Martin).

Limitation of Classical and Flamenco Guitar Styles

In keeping with European Art music conventions Classical guitar has reached to its highs and it has now become a very deep Art form. Due to this complexity and too mellow sound of classical guitar, it has made many young people away from this guitar form. Being confined to a rigid structure classical guitar form has limitations in competing with Rock and Jazz guitar styles specially in attracting young people. Traditional Flamenco guitar style is comparatively less refined and less deep than classical guitar style and its rough form of sounds has made young people move away from this guitar form. It can be observed universally that young people have deviated from listening and playing pure classical guitar style and flamenco guitar style forms.

The techniques of classical and flamenco guitar is limited to some extent. Not only these two instruments but all the other instruments in the music world has faced this challenge. Therefore a composer or a player of classical or flamenco guitar is always in the search of new boundaries for these two instruments. The player or the composer always find a value in this search of extended techniques for classical and flamenco guitar. Therefore both the composers and players are in a process of absorbing extended techniques of their guitar forms to uplift the value of the instruments and the compositions.

Combination of Classical and Flamenco Guitar

To overcome the limitations of both classical and flamenco guitar styles cross pollination is inevitable. This has mainly occurred during the period of 1950 – 1980. By 1950 flamenco and classical guitar schools were well established. Throughout this period flamenco guitarists such as Victor Monge (1942), Manuel Cano (1926 – 1990) and Paco de Lucia (1947 – 2014) continued the tradition of flamenco guitar borrowing some forms of classical guitar in different ways. This dialog and mutual influence have continued to the present. The author originally a classical guitarist had the opportunity of learning flamenco guitar from Mexican flamenco guitarist Fredric Bruno had the opportunity of mixing the flamenco guitar forms to classical guitar methods when developing extending techniques.

Extended Techniques

The top board of the classical or flamenco guitar is tuned to a note. A classical guitar the top board is tuned to B flat or F note and a Flamenco guitar top board is tune to E note where the major note of the guitar is E. Therefore, the composer has another rhythm added to the strings. This board produce a pleasing and meaningful sound. Normally the sound produce by the strings is a familiar and common thing. This is the area where the extended techniques start and a new change added to the guitar. In flamenco guitar the traditional way of tapping the top board with the right-hand finger 'a' (golpe) is a common and a traditional way. In classical guitar 'tambor' (percussion) hitting the bridge of the guitar near the saddle with the right-hand finger 'p' is a common and traditional technique, there are only two tapping techniques belongs to the classical and flamenco guitar up to the 20th century. Now the player has a fine opportunity to expand the new ways of playing the guitar with meaningful and rich tapping techniques o. In the three compositions "Your Way", "The 3rd Movement", and "Beyond the Triangle" the author visulize the idea and feeling expressing in a new way with his extended techniques. The significance of this innovation is to give all the players extra and a very broad area for their compositions. Mankind always wants to get satisfaction with what they have. They need more meaning and extend their boarders for their satisfaction. Therefore going through these extended techniques the listener get something new which will add a meaning to their lives and the living pattern. The author who composed these three compositions is with the guitar for about 50 years and always felt the need for new and perfect way of expressing new ideas through his compositions. The author's intention is that young guitarists such as university undergraduates who are learning guitar under author, and other young guitar players representing various guitar traditions may express their ideas on guitar in a more meaningful manner by using these extended techniques.

The audience or the listeners are familiar with melodies and harmonies produced by strings of the guitar and its common sound manipulations. By adding these extended techniques the composer can take audience to a new dimension. These additions will find new boundaries in the heart of the listener and the composers will get a chance to add these techniques and they too get the opportunity of producing what they expect. Specially the world leading Flamenco guitar makers such as Conde Hermanos, Santos Hernandez, Domingo Esteso, Manuel Contreras and Manue Reyes are making fine Flamenco guitars with well-tuned and seasoned top boards tuned to the note E. Therefore, the player has the ability to create a broad platform for the audience.

By blending the two styles or the techniques of classical and flamenco guitar the player can add more meaning and vigor to his creation. By adding or combing the extended techniques he can get what he expects from the creation. Specially, the classical guitar techniques have their own limitations. It is normally within a ridged framework. But the flamenco style which is more relax for improvisation can change the color, tone, or rhythm in the composition. Therefore, the composer is capable of getting what he expected from his composition.

The 3rd Movement

The author tries to visualize the important movement in human life. Different rhythm patterns give the idea of changing movements in reality of daily flow of our lives. This piece open with right hand "p" finger playing fast tremolo effect with bass note open E which is a Flamenco technique and three-stroke rasgueados continue with the tapping to the top board with p finger with repeating melody note which is authors own technique. This will end with continuous rasgueados . In the second part a normal melody in classical guitar form is used to indicate the story of a incident whish occur in someone's daily life routine. In the next change, very rough

three-stroke rasgueados ending with the right hand fourth finger, and e nail tapping near the 15th fret of the fret board is utilized. The other technique used at the end is the back rasgueados with the thumb p finger tapping to the edge of the sound hole. In this variation, color of the tone changes which highlights the authors extended techniques.

Beyond the Triangle

The second piece composed by the author is "Beyond the Triangle". In this composition author use innovative extended techniques created using cross pollinations of classical and flamenco guitar styles. The piece starts with tamboura and a repeat tap to the fret board (15th fret). After that introduction with a classical guitar melody a charming melody line part highlights the theme of the piece. At the end of this theme a sudden variation with fast and heavy tapping to the top board and the fret board an extended technique created by the author to indicate the difference of the changing mood in our daily life. The so-called Triangle is limiting our lives but an incident occurs in our life cannot be explained by limiting to this triangle. With this change the second variation of the piece begins with a mellow melody line in classical guitar form. At the end another wave of plucking of the strings with right hand second finger at the 7th fret of the guitar takes place. After this the most important part of the piece and the last part starts with heavy double tap (tapping with right hand thumb p finger and the other four finger combination). Then the rhythm is changing to a 4/4-time thumb finger on the tambour and second tapping to the 15th fret of the fret board to get the more drum effect. This change with the thumb and the four finger of the right hand runs through the two sides of the top board repeating a very fast (presto) tempo. Next change start with tapping to the strings covering the fret board with both hands using four finger of the left-hand and the-right hand palm cover the 12th fret of the guitar on the strings and a very fast mute sound effect goes to the top fret the E major chord followed by a pause. After a very short silence heavy thumb beat to the edge of the sound board and to the strings with right hand takes place. All these are extended techniques created by the author tries to explain that the happening of life or feeling of our happenings not limited to a Triangle. These feelings or the happenings go Beyond the Triangle. If someone stops trying to control to be in a ridged framework his or her powers will be unlimited.

Your Way

Music, heals and give some kind of satisfaction. This piece has composed to give the listner that kind of feelings. The rhythm or the tempo is the main driving factor of mankind's satisfaction. From early history this rhythm was recognized and also the heartbeat of the human being is continuing throughout his/her lifetime. This rhythm of life is so familiar to man/women before music. Author tries to highlight this life rhythm throughout this composition. The piece start with the classical guitar form with a light melody highlighting the theme of the composition by using various extended techniques. In the second part the theme moves to a variation with still in the classical form. Then the common beat, tapping to the board of the guitar gives the listener an opportunity to evoke more feelings and make the listener aware that you are listening to a very strong beat of life. In the middle of the piece there is another variation with muting the strings with the right hand and tapping to the fretboard and tambour highlights a strong tempo. Then the rhythm changes again to the theme without any interruption to the theme with continuing the same tempo. Tapping on the top board of the guitar in this manner is an extended technique introduce by the author. The piece ends with a strong continued rasgueados.

Methodology

Author has introduced these three pieces with extended techniques to randomly selected fifty boys and girls studying guitar, aged between 21 to 27, representatives of young people by playing the pieces to them and asked them to listen the pieces through YouTube channel for three months period. Later their opinions on the three pieces were recorded through an interview guided with a semi structured questioner. 76% expressed that they prefer the three pieces than the three pure classical guitar pieces and three pure flamenco guitar pieces of same standard played by the same author which are also published in the YouTube channel.

Students of the University of Visual and Performing Arts who are studying Classical and Flamenco Guitar for a four-year special degree have to do a creation (duration of 3 to 5 minutes) for their final year stage performance. In this task it has been observed that about 55% of the students preferred to apply extended techniques in their creation. When they were interviewed they said that through the extended techniques it was easy to express their idea and the feeling in a better way.

The author performed as a solo guitarist more than forty years and the author started his carrier as a Classical guitarist. In that time author had the opportunity of playing classical guitar solos in popular musical concerts where the majority of the audience were young people. When observed the response of the audience was not satisfactory. Recently author has experimented the response of the similar kind of audience by introducing the above three pieces and similar kind of pieces and it has been observed that the response was very high. The best examples are the author performed the above mentioned three compositions four times with a leading band in Sri Lanka named "Wayo". After the first performance on the 13th May 2014 at Maharagama Youth Center it has been observed that the audience specially the young people has requested the leader of the band Sangeeth Wijayasuriya to continue performance with this solo guitar performance in future concerts. For the 2nd time on the 8th of Nov. 2014 at the same venue, then 4th of Nov. 2015 at the University of Kalaniya hall and for the fourth time 7th of Oct 2018 at Nelum Pokuna has received the same positive responses from the audiences. The other observations were made at the Guitar Festivals organized by the Sri Lanka Guitar Association, an event annually held in Sri Lanka. This started in 2011 and continued in 2012, 2013 and the author performed in Colombo, University of Perdeniya, Kandy and in Chlaw. In these concerts the pieces performed with blending classical and flamenco guitar forms and with extended techniques were highly appreciated among all ages in the audience.

Conclusion

It was evident that, when the author was playing his compositions with extended techniques attracted new crowd including young people to guitar. Introducing extended techniques such as tapping to the top board, fret board and sides of the guitar along with classical and flamenco guitar techniques to produce different sounds from the tuned boards of the guitar, when composing and playing music provides a new dimension which attracts young people to the Guitar.

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