

Original Note
was B

The musical score for 'The Rose Tree' is presented in two systems. The first system is a single melodic line in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes, with some notes beamed together. There are three measures marked with a circled '2' above them, indicating a second ending. The second system is a guitar accompaniment, shown in two staves. The top staff is in G major and 2/4 time, featuring a series of chords and single notes. The bottom staff is in G major and 2/4 time, featuring a series of chords and single notes. The guitar part includes a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature. The melody and guitar part are written in a simple, accessible style, suitable for a beginner's guitar book.

The musical score for 'The Rose Tree' is presented in two systems. The first system shows the beginning of the piece, starting with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature (C). The melody is written on a single staff, and the lyrics 'The Rose Tree' are written below it. The second system continues the melody, with the lyrics 'The Rose Tree' repeated. The score is written in a simple, clear style, suitable for a children's songbook.

Au ritournel y comó si se alegrá.

[illegible]

The Notation

As a notation geek, it is interesting to me that the stars Tárrega uses for the snare hits are written on the note G above the staff when the snare is played alone, but written as the note F in space one of the staff when the melody is present above it. Others, myself included, would have placed all the stars on the F note space throughout to indicate it is the same exact effect throughout the passage. As you will see in some of the following examples, sometimes two or three snares (or other effects) could be present, with each instrument assigned to a different staff location for clarity. Indeed, in a later edition by Ediciones Musicales Madrid, all the snare hits are notated with symbols as D's below the staff, with the stems all pointing downward. I have added the tab.

Example #5:

Gran Jota de Concierto, Ediciones Musicales Madrid edition. (Tab has been added.)

The image shows a musical score for 'Gran Jota de Concierto' by Francisco Tárrega. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. It consists of four systems of music. The first three systems are for guitar, with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. The fourth system is for a different instrument, possibly a piano or a different guitar, with a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and fingerings.

The Fingering

The only right-hand fingering is an “imi” at the end of the melody section. The “p’s” at the beginning of the melody look like the symbol for “piano” meaning to play softly. However, Tárrega may have meant the “p’s” to indicate the use of the thumb, but the printer/publisher mistook them as “piano” markings. I don’t think there is any way to know for certain. That confusion occurred frequently in the past and continues to happen today.

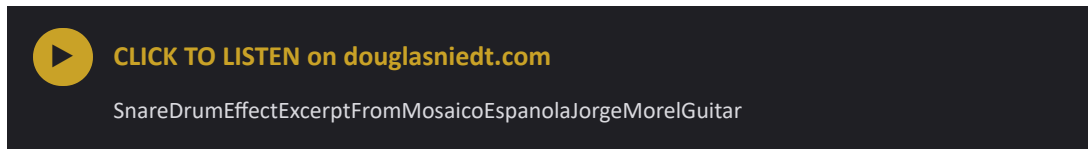
Incidentally, I corrected the wrong note at the end of the first phrase of the melody. The note was printed as a B. However, the score shows a “2” by the B indicating that it should be played with the 2nd finger—which is impossible in its context. It is clearly supposed to be an A played by the 2nd finger.

The left-hand fingering assumes (although it is not indicated) a barre at the 9th fret. Everything falls neatly into position. However, I and other guitarists find it rather difficult to get a clear 3rd-string E and hold the snare at the same time.

Here are a few alternate fingerings for the passage:

Jorge Morel put together a medley or mosaic of popular Spanish melodies and recorded it as *Mosaico Española* on his 1960's LP, *The Warm Guitar*. He includes his version of the snare drum passage from Tárrega's *Gran Jota*.

Have a listen:



Mosaico Española (Jorge Morel) Jorge Morel, Guitar

The most striking thing to note here is that Morel chose to do the snare drum at the 8th fret instead of the 9th as Tárrega did. I think it makes the melody much easier to play. He also changed a couple notes of the melody along the way.

Fantasy for Solo Guitar, Op. 107 (Malcolm Arnold)

Malcolm Arnold uses the snare drum effect in the *March* of his *Fantasy for Solo Guitar, Op. 107*. The *March* is the sixth of seven movements of the piece. As I mentioned earlier, there is a slight challenge in transitioning from the previous movement (*Arietta*) smoothly into this *March*. I have included the ending bars of the *Arietta* to illustrate the problem.

The *Arietta* ends with quiet harmonics and an open E. The drum effect must be carefully and quietly prepared for the *March* that follows. This is a good example of a spot where the aforementioned Method #2 of execution works well.

Example #7 (end of the *Arietta*):



Example #8:

12

Allegro (♩ = 112)

March

Snare
Drum

CVI

CVI

CVI

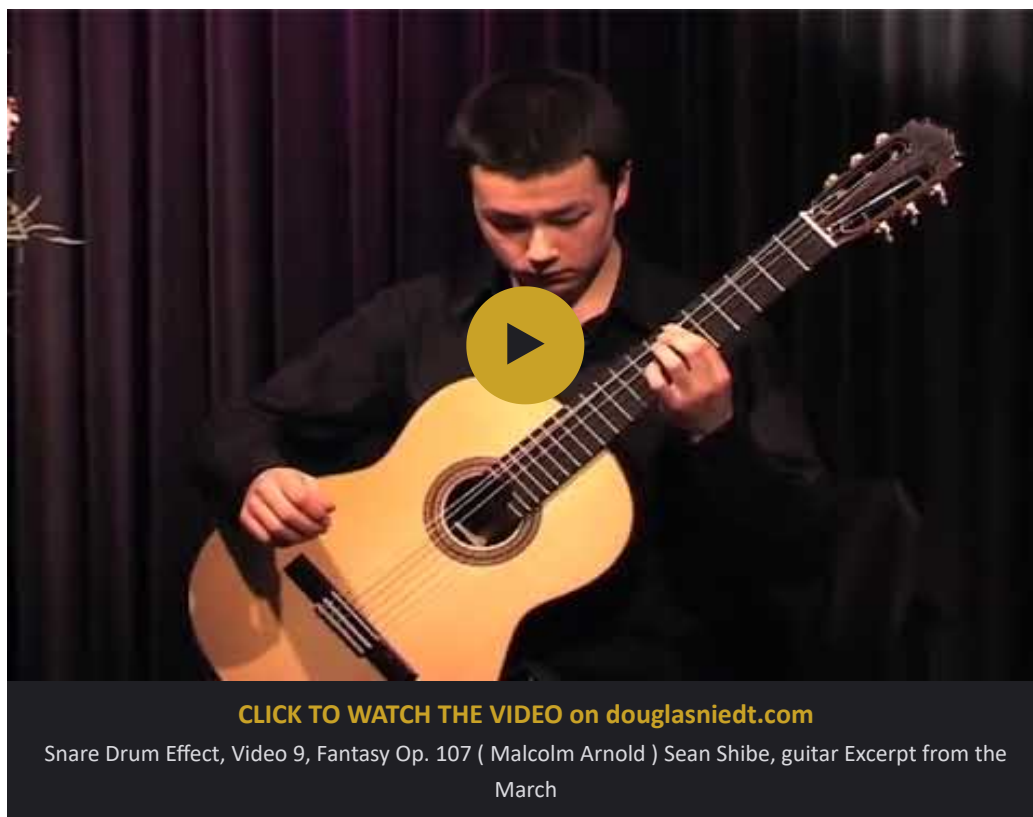
CVI

CVI

CVI

nat.

Watch guitarist Sean Shibe perform the segment (Video #9):



The Notation

At the end of the *Arietta* we are instructed to “prepare for Snare Drum effect” and the beginning of the March indicates “Snare Drum”. But no instructions are given anywhere in the score for how to do the effect. Fortunately, once the melody and accompaniment parts enter, it is fairly obvious the snare must be played at the 6th fret on the 5th and 6th strings. Other than that, the notation is clear and consistent.

***Tin Soldiers* (more accurately translated as *Playing Soldiers*) from *The Prince's Toys* (Nikita Koshkin)**

This may be the second most well-known use of the snare drum effect in the classical guitar repertoire. This is the fourth movement of Koshkin’s masterwork. Its use of the effect is more varied than other works. Noted as a “tamburo militare”, it begins the movement and is played on the 1st and 2nd strings. Rather than staying stationary at one fret, the snare is played at various frets as a melody. The effect simultaneously mimics a toy drum and toy trumpet.

Example #9:

“Les Soldats de Plomb”
“The Tin Soldiers”

Marciale

The image shows a musical score for a piece titled "Les Soldats de Plomb" (The Tin Soldiers). The score is written for a single staff in 2/4 time, marked "Marciale". It features a series of chords and melodic lines. Handwritten red annotations include: a circled "1" and "2" with an "x" next to the "2", with the text "cross 1st and 2nd strings to produce snare effect."; a circled "1 2 3 2 1" with the text "Left-Hand Fingering"; and the text "snare ends" at the bottom. The score also includes markings for "naturaie", "loco", "ff", "sul pont.", and "Tromba".

1 2 3 2 1

cross 1st and 2nd strings to produce snare effect.

Left-Hand Fingering

naturaie

loco ff sul pont. Tromba

snare ends

Watch Vladimir Mikulka perform the opening (Video #10):



As the piece develops, the toy soldiers become more real, and the drum effects become more real as well.

Example #10:

Watch Vladimir Mikulka perform the passage (Video #11):



The piece concludes with a variation of the toy drum snare effect heard at the beginning.

Example #11:

Tempo I (Marciale)

rall.

gliss.

① Tamb. mil.

② Tamb. mil.

Andante

ord.

ff *mf* *mp* *pp*

Tempo I

f

③ Tamb. mil.

pizz.

rall.

Vivo *

ff

④ 0

⑤ Tamb. mil.

mp

pp

loco

**

Watch Vladimir Mikulka perform the passage (Video #12):



CLICK TO WATCH THE VIDEO on douglasniedt.com

Snare Drum Effect, Video #12, Excerpt 3 from The Prince's Toys (Nikita Koshkin) Vladimír Mikulka, guitar

The Notation

Koshkin is very clear and consistent in his notation. He indicates the snare as a “Tamburo militare”. He clearly indicates what strings are to be crossed and even indicates right hand fingerings for rolled effects. He uses the letter z for the right-hand 4th or pinky finger. However, in example #10 line 2, the notation is very confusing. A “CVII” is placed above the staff but does not indicate a barre. The snare is at the 7th fret held by the 2nd finger.

Beat! Beat! Drums! from *A Procession Winding Around Me* (Jeffrey Van)

This striking work by guitarist Jeffrey Van was written for mixed choir and guitar. It uses several percussion effects including the snare to capture the “drums of war”. Using four Civil War poems by American poet Walt Whitman, the work’s remarkable cohesion of text, guitar, and voices captures the richness and depth of the American Civil War experience.

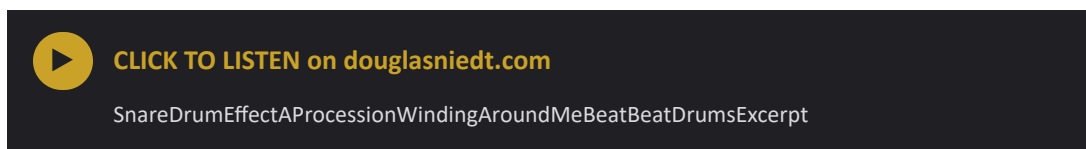
The snare effect is used in the 2nd movement titled, *Beat! Beat! Drums!*

Example #12:

The musical score for "Beat! Beat! Drums!" is presented in a single system with five staves. The notation includes various musical elements:

- Staff 1:** Measures 80-84. It begins with a melody in the treble clef, marked *mf*. Measure 84 includes a snare drum effect marked with a "z" and the instruction "Prepare snare drum effect (ord.)".
- Staff 2:** Measures 85-96. This staff features a complex rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth notes and triplets, marked *mp* and *mf*.
- Staff 3:** Measures 97-110. This staff continues the rhythmic pattern with triplets, marked *mp*.
- Staff 4:** Measures 111-114. It includes a snare drum effect marked with a "z" and the instruction "Prepare snare drum effect".
- Staff 5:** Measures 115-118. This staff features a final rhythmic pattern with sixteenth notes and triplets, marked *mp* and *mf*.

Listen to a performance of this section (choir and guitarist unknown):



Beat! Beat! Drums! (Jeffrey Van) performers unknown

The Notation

The notation is clear and consistent, though no suggested right-hand fingering is provided. The guitar part includes a page of “Guitar Notation Symbols”. Listed is the “Snare Drum Effect (cross the 5th and 6th strings and hold at the sixth fret; strike both strings simultaneously).”

El Berimbau (Baden Powell) arranged by Argentine guitarist, Cacho Tirao

For those who may not be familiar with him, Wikipedia tells us “Baden Powell was one of the most prominent and celebrated Brazilian guitarists and guitar composers of his time. He explored the instrument to its utmost limits, playing it in a distinctive, unique manner, incorporating virtuoso classical techniques together with popular harmony and swing.”

After the introduction, this very unusual arrangement uses three snare drum effects simultaneously to imitate another percussion instrument, the berimbau. Wikipedia tells us, the berimbau “is a single-string percussion instrument, a musical bow, from Brazil. The instrument is known for being the subject matter of a popular song by Brazilian guitarist Baden Powell, with lyrics by Vinicius de Moraes.”

Example #13:

Handwritten musical score for guitar, featuring four staves. The first staff includes a melodic line with a '6' above it, a 'sigue acc' instruction, and a 'roll' instruction. The second staff is marked 'LENTO ACC poco' and 'poco', with a '2' above the first measure. The third and fourth staves continue the melodic and rhythmic notation. The score concludes with the instruction 'REPITE 4 VECES ACCELERANDO Y CRESCENDO' and a final measure marked with a circled '8'.

Watch the arranger, Argentine guitarist Cacho Tirao perform the percussive excerpt (Video #13):

A video player interface showing a close-up of a guitarist's hands. The left hand is positioned on the fretboard, and the right hand is strumming the strings. A large yellow play button is centered over the video. Below the video, there is a black bar with white text.

CLICK TO WATCH THE VIDEO on douglasniedt.com

Snare Drum Effect, Video #13, El Berimbau (Baden Powell) Cacho Tirao, guitar Excerpt

I found it interesting that he doesn't hold the string pairs with the tips of his fingers but instead lays them fairly flat. Note that he uses the thumb rest stroke with all flesh.

The Notation

I was only able to find the handwritten manuscript shown above. I don't know who wrote the manuscript. It could have been the arranger, Cachó Tirao, or someone else. At any rate, the notation is clear and consistent. Each of the three snares is placed at separate and consistent locations on the staff. The string crossings are clearly indicated before the snare section begins.

Flamenco

Let's end where it all probably began—flamenco. Here is the great Sabicas performing the snare drum passage from *Sitio de Zaragoza* (Video #14):

