

Study No 4

The third and fourth fingers are featured in this study as "left-hand plucking fingers," that is, doing most of the descending slurs. Those two fingers have more difficulty in slurring than the second, (second to first, second to open and any finger to the open string it is on are so easy that even first week beginners can negotiate them without any trouble) and Carcassi gives them a real workout by writing note sequences which force the left hand wrist to adjust continuously to a more efficient position; without realizing it, the student is made to slur from all angles. In measure 5, the transition from the finger on the D natural and then "pivot" on the 2nd finger—moving it towards the right without displacing the tip, that is, *rolling it, not sliding it*—so that the G# can be reached by the 3rd comfortably and in doing so the 4th finger is able to attain the position which gives the leverage to slur cleanly. Don't expect the fingers to go against their anatomic possibilities; their mission is to go down (stop) and up (lift, pulling a bit) on the strings. The wrist, arm and elbow are in charge of taking the fingers to the exact place where they can do their work properly. Be particularly aware of the guide fingers in measures 15 and 16. The muting of the bass (A natural in m. 16) at the same time that the higher octave A is plucked *apoyando* (so that the skip of the octave is clearly perceived) has been described by some of my pupils as "a discovery of mine." The truth—I always answered—is that I found absolutely nothing. I simply played what was in the score. There are four real "problem" spots in the score in muting the basses. Usually (as in measures 4-5, for example) where the bass moves from a lower string to a higher, the natural position of the right hand thumb mutes properly. However, in these problem spots the situation is reversed: measures 2-3, measure 5, measures 15-16, and measures 18-19. In all four cases, the solution is the same: the muting of the ringing bass is unexpectedly performed by a free left hand finger. In measure 5, for example, on the second beat, precisely as the low E is plucked, the first finger of the left hand lightly touches the D string (still ringing) and stops it—just as if you were going to put your finger down but changed your mind. This is a technique which often comes in useful. One final observation on the technique of the slur: Most guitarists are under the impression that the incisive clarity which is the mark of a good slur consists in a really strong "plucking" action by the left hand fingers. Of course one should aim at a sharp, clean action by those fingers but the student should remember that to obtain a crisp slur it is essential to hold very firmly the finger which

Siciliana

M. Carcassi

1 a m

5 a m i i

9 m i a m

13

17 Fine

20 m i a V IV II

25 i a m i