

*MASTERY of the FLAMENCO GUITAR SERIES*

OPEN YOUR MUSICAL SOUL TO ITS FULL POTENTIAL

VOLUME I • MASTERY OF TECHNIQUE

Brief supplementary music notation to accompany  
the instructional video with 16 special training sessions.

*by* GUILLERMO RIOS

Secrets for both beginners and advanced players, providing the break'  
thoughts that pave the way for rapid progress in the an of Flamenco Music.

Produced and Directed by Julian Richards

After a total of 17 years of performing in Spain with some of the most respected - flamenco artists there, his compositional and technical mastery brought him to the United States, where he has since won accolades as featured guitarist and soloist with the celebrated companies of Jose Greco. Maria Benitez. Jose Molina, Maria Alba and Rosa Montoya. Guillermo Rios\*

extensive career has taken him to the great stages of North America and Europe, where he has performed numerous solo concerts, including three successful performances at Carnegie Hall. His work reflects not only his great understanding of the genre, but years of concentrated study with the famous guitar maestros: Juan Maya "Marole", Sabicas and Pepe Habichuela.

# Mastery of the Flamenco Guitar

## Volume I Mastery of Technique

OPEN YOUR MUSICAL SOUL TO ITS FULL POTENTIAL.

Music notation to accompany the video.

by Guillermo Rios

Booklet design, typesetting, and music notation by Dennis Donovan.

Video produced and directed by Julian Richards.

Zapaleado Elegante was transcribed by David Easely.

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## **Mastery of the Flamenco Guitar**

Congratulations! You have just purchased Volume I of a unique and powerful course which addresses the crucial steps one must take in order to understand and master the mental and technical requirements of the flamenco guitar. There are many excellent publications teaching this fantastic music, all of which are beneficial to aficionados of the flamenco guitar. But to date, none of them explains how to train your hands and reflexes to execute essential flamenco techniques with total relaxation and fluidity.

In this 95-minute video presentation Guillermo Rios clearly explains and illustrates how to move your hands in a natural and controlled

way. He guides the viewer through 16 lessons rich in priceless tips about the major flamenco techniques and how to practice and master them. Rios stresses the importance of training your natural reflexes - and illustrates how to achieve this. One must observe the natural laws of music and develop the ability to flow with them - and this takes hard work and constant attention. The reward is the unlimited joy of self-expression possible when one's technique is so natural that it responds instinctively to creative impulses.

Although total mastery of technique is only one of the steps towards the emotional fulfillment of playing flamenco music, it is a crucial one - and with proper guidance all lovers of this music can

acquire it and pass beyond it. They can then create their own unique and valuable contributions to this ever-evolving music, and express their most profound and passionate emotions.

Guillermo Rios began his concentrated study of the flamenco guitar as an adult at age 25. His principal maestro, Juan Maya "Marote", was and continues to be his source of inspiration and love for this incredible music. Juan's unending patience and uncompromising demand for excellence and musical integrity challenged and inspired Guillermo to a tireless work ethic and ambition to be an integral and contributing member of the flamenco community. Juan Maya also stressed the necessity to keep an open mind

and to listen to and learn from everyone.

Guillermo has carried forth these high standards into the flamenco profession and although his style is deeply influenced by Sabicas, Juan Maya, Pepe Habichuela, and Paco de Lucia, he has developed a unique and soulful "feel" that is truly his own. His vast experience as an accompanist of the Canle and Baile and his close personal friendship with some of the world's legendary guitarists have enabled Guillermo to truly understand the guitar and eminently qualify him to publish this valuable and ambitious video course.

## Foreword

During my career of more than 20 years, I have had the privilege of learning and truly understanding flamenco music while on the job, rehearsing and performing it. Years of touring with Spanish dance companies, years of nightly club performances accompanying great dancers and mediocre ones, great singers and not-so-great singers, have engraved on my mind a natural understanding and love for this great music.

Even more years of close friendship with Agustin Castellon "Sabicás", his brother Diego, Pepe "Habichuela" and his family, and with Juan Maya "Marote", my *compadre* (my son's

godfather), have shown me the majestic and spiritual beauty of flamenco music. Many other fine artists have contributed priceless and enormous knowledge and inspiration to me and continue to motivate me - even to the completion of this production.

All of us have two essential personal characteristics in common: unbounded love and affection for flamenco music and a tireless and intelligent work ethic. These are the "mysterious" sources, without which the flamenco guitar cannot be played properly. But, on the other hand, with these qualities all is open to you.

In these sixteen lessons, listen carefully to what I say about practicing the exercises and position-

ing your hand. Listen again and again to my emphasis on relaxation and tension-free movement. Finally, understand the spirit of what I'm teaching and apply it to your music as soon as possible. Your constant attention to these details will quickly reward you and you will be free to add your own valuable musical contributions to the ever-expanding flamenco repertoire,  
Viva el arte!

Guillermo Rios  
Aptos, California  
1993

*"Con la guitarra podemos mostrar las maravillas que llevamos en el alma."*

*("With the guitar we can express the marvelous feelings in our soul")*

- Agustin Castellon "Sabicás"

*"Practice until your fingers are about to bleed!"*

-Juan Maya "Marote"

Session Number 1

A minor scale

The image displays the A minor scale on a single treble clef staff in common time (C). The scale is presented in two parts: an ascending sequence and a descending sequence. The ascending sequence starts on the first line (A4) and proceeds through the second space (B4), third space (C5), and fourth space (D5) to the fifth line (E5). The descending sequence starts on the fifth line (E5) and proceeds through the fourth space (D5), third space (C5), second space (B4), and first space (A4) to the first line (A3). The notes are connected by stems, and the descending sequence includes a double bar line before the final note. The first measure of the ascending sequence is marked with a '1' above the staff, and the first measure of the descending sequence is marked with a '3' above the staff.

Session Number 5

E Major scale



Session Number 7

# Exercise in F

1

1

7

Session Number 7

Exercise in F Sharp

The musical score is written on three staves in treble clef, 2/4 time, with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first staff begins with a measure rest (marked '1') and contains 10 measures of music. The second staff contains 10 measures. The third staff contains 10 measures, ending with a double bar line. The music consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, primarily moving in an ascending and then descending pattern.

## Session Number 10

### - Zapateado Elegante -

Here is a piece which will challenge you and after working hard on it, will give you great fulfillment. Slight differences between the score and my performance of it on the video may occur.

Use your musical judgment to resolve these differences - you may want to add to the piece or change it. I highly recommend this, after you can play it perfectly *my way!*

# Zapateado Elegante

Guillermo Rios

The image displays a musical score for a piece titled "Zapateado Elegante" by Guillermo Rios. The score is written on three staves of music, each beginning with a measure number: 1, 7, and 13. The first staff starts with a treble clef, a 4/4 time signature, and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It features a series of chords and a melodic line that includes a triplet of eighth notes. The second staff continues the piece, showing a change in time signature to 2/4 and the use of several triplet markings over eighth notes. The third staff continues the melodic line with eighth notes and rests. The notation includes various note values, rests, and triplet markings.

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19

Musical staff 19: Treble clef, starting with a sequence of eighth notes. The second half of the staff contains complex chordal textures with vertical stems and arrows, some enclosed in boxes.

25

Musical staff 25: Treble clef, featuring triplets of eighth notes and quarter notes. Dynamic markings include "p" and "III" with a dashed line.

30

Musical staff 30: Treble clef, continuing the melodic line with quarter and eighth notes. Dynamic markings include "p" and "V" with a dashed line.

35

Musical staff 35: Treble clef, featuring sixteenth-note passages. Dynamic markings include "p" and a page number "14" at the bottom.



64

3

p

p

69

3

p

p

p

p

1 2 3 4

74

p

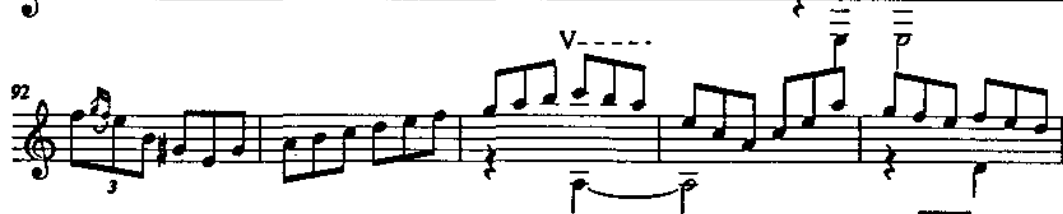
p

80

III

p

p



109

III

115

III VII

121

III V VII

127

III



157

*p*

162

*p*

167

*p* *p*

172

*p* 20 *p*

177

183

189

195

3

VII

p

3

II

P

21

201 III

206 I

211

217

*accel.*

223



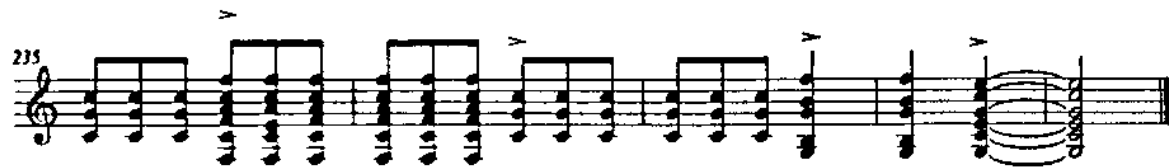
Musical notation for measure 223, featuring a treble clef and a series of eighth notes and quarter notes.

229



Musical notation for measure 229, featuring a treble clef and a series of eighth notes and quarter notes, with accents (v) above several notes.

235



Musical notation for measure 235, featuring a treble clef and a series of eighth notes and quarter notes, with accents (v) above several notes. The notation concludes with a double bar line and the word "CLOSE" written vertically.

There are 3 sequel programs to look for in the  
**Mastery of the Flamenco Guitar Series:**

**Volume I Mastery of Technique**

**Volume II Soleares and Alegrias**

**Volume III Bulerias**

**Volume IV Free-form styles  
(Toques Libres)**

### **Volume II Soleares and Alegrias.**

In Soleares and one of its brothers, Alegrias, are found the blend of all of flamenco's cultural heritage. Rhythmically and harmonically, centuries of musical refinement and development are reflected in the beautiful music of Soleares and Alegrias. As in Volume I, Guillermo Rios teaches how to listen, study, and relax while playing the music, however complicated. His in-depth discussion of both the technical and emotional expression of these beautiful flamenco styles will inspire a burning desire to practice and play, to open up the musical creative soul within.

The forerunners of Bulerias, Alegrias and Soleares have a multitude of styles and forms, and they are incredibly beautiful. Having the same fundamental rhythmic structure as Bulerias -they are the bones and spirit of this music.

### **Volume III Bulerias**

Loved and mastered by all great flamenco artists, Bulerias is the essence of all of flamenco's elements rolled together. Profound emotion, silliness, competition, understatement, nobility, and pure joyful fun are all possibilities here. The spellbinding rhythm holds it all together and the musical possibilities are endless and ever-challenging.

With the understanding and mastery of the techniques taught in Volumes I and II, Guillermo explains and demonstrates how to hear and feel the rhythm and how to relax with it. He shows *how* to listen and play at the same time, and how to practice and develop a precise and natural technique for both maintaining the flow of the rhythm and executing complicated and challenging variations. He also explains and demonstrates how to play with "Palmas" accompaniment as well as with dancers and singers. This video will allow you to go deeply into the extraordinary world of flamenco music and to feel relaxed and in control.

## **Volume IV "Toques Libras" (Non-rhythmic pieces)**

Some of the most important and most beautiful flamenco music is contained in the Rondenas, Tarantas, Mineras, Granafnas, and Malaguenas. All of these songs are members of the Fandangos family and are played without a specific dominating rhythmic structure, thus their name "Toques Libres," or "free" guitar pieces. These songs are brilliant jewels of the flamenco repertoire and Guillermo Rios explores them with inspirational clarity in this program.

He teaches how to maintain the emotional flow of the music by using silence as punctuation. "Silence is where the magic lies - however you

break the silence is your choice; and it can be incredibly beautiful." Guillermo also explores the different keys these pieces can be played in, as well as alternate tunings of the guitar to enhance the character of a particular key. This concentrated study of an often-neglected, yet incredibly rich element of flamenco music is a must.





**MASTERY OF THE FLAMENCO GUITAR**  
**VOLUME II SOLEARES AND ALEGRIAS**

A Study Guide to accompany the video program

**by Guillermo Rios**

## VOLUME II      MASTERY OF THE FLAMENCO GUITAR "SOLEARES AND ALEGRIAS"

Congratulations on your purchase of Volume II of my "Mastery of the Flamenco Guitar" Soleares and Alegrias. I believe in the content of each volume of this series, especially that many of the mysteries of Flamenco music simply result from a misunderstanding of structure. In my 25 years of professional experience I have discovered that real knowledge of structure is the key to being a good player. Along the same vein, the technique of the Flamenco guitar and efficient ways of acquiring it, which I examine in Vol. I, must be correctly and thoroughly understood to avoid wasting valuable time. I recommend Vol. 1 as a reference source as you journey forward in your knowledge of Soleares and Alegrias.

This booklet is intended to provide you with supplemental information and guidance as you watch the program and have the guitar in your hand.

In my extensive teaching experience I have become increasingly convinced of the validity and merit of learning flamenco in the time honored traditional way. The maestro guiding and showing the student one on one. Recently, a great deal of flamenco music has been transcribed to standard musical notation and tablature, which enriches all of us. Keeping in mind that we now can enjoy the fruits of both worlds, I believe that flamenco music played as scored will not have the right feel, if the player is not familiar, indeed the master of its fundamental concepts and structure. Conversely, he who has learned this music in the traditional way will be able to not only enrich his repertoire from an accurate score, but also broaden his conceptual knowledge, giving added strength to development of personal style. Personal style is one of the necessary goals and laws in the growth of a flamenco guitarist. To develop this, one must master

the other laws; i.e. understanding and mastery of rhythm, and how melody and harmony are interwoven and blended with this rhythm.

In this program I have included a drum machine programmed accordingly for Soleares and Alegrias. This teaching aid clearly illustrates where time is going and how it supports and relates to melody and harmony. We are human and think we know what time and rhythmic structure are doing. The metronome or drum machine will show us that we are often not so smart as we think. These tools were invented by musicians who know of this tendency. We can now calibrate our minds with these invaluable inventions and constantly broaden and improve our accurate perception of time: This knowledge and the tireless practice required to achieve mastery of its principles is the only way for us to play the flamenco guitar the way we dream of playing it.

"Play one note at a time"

"Speed is irrelevant; only tempo and note value will yield a musical result."

"When you have set a tempo, think of the second hand on a clock moving - always at the same pace."

Agustin Castellon "Sabicas"

## Soleares

As you watch the program:

I recommend taking the time to view the whole program without the guitar in your hand. Simply to familiarize yourself with its flow and approach.

With the guitar in your hand, listen to my discussion of the rhythmic structure. Both the Soleares and Alegrias rhythmic measures are 12 beats in length. On this

program I have set up the drum machine quite neutrally, that is with all the 12 beats played, some of them with a stronger accent. There are many, many ways to "accent" Soleares, but for the purposes of this program, I leave the drum machine in one place, in order to maximize the time permitted in a video demonstration. Here are some ways accents can be felt in the 12 beat measure of Soleares:

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
		o			o		o		o		o
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
		o				o	o		o		o

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
					o						o
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
o			o			o			o		

As you move your hand, think of synchronizing your movement to the tempo of the drum machine. Gradually start adding rasgueados, and/or accents until you are doing what I am doing. The continuous rasqueaso I am using here, follows a description of the right hand as P=thumb, i=index, m=middle, a=ring fingers. The sequence is a m i m a - a, m, i go down and then a, m come back up.

Practice this slowly and lightly at first. It is a very useful and "flamenco" sounding rasqueaso. The main objective of this part of the program is to synchronize

yourself with the tempo and "feel" of the drum machine. As you develop the rasgueado shown here, or an alternative, gradually insert it, but remember, time is king.

As we get to the chords of Soleares and their equivalents, stop the video, until you have each one correctly. Check yourself by going back and hearing if your chord sounds the same as mine. When applying these chords to the rhythm machine, take your time. Imitate my demonstration until you can do it. You may have to count out the beats at first until you can play without having to count. I stress this important point learn to hear how long the measure is by instinct rather than by counting. When you hear your telephone ring, you know how much time elapses between rings. Have each twelve beat bar as instinctively understood in your mind.

As you apply a melody to the Soleares time structure, do not be afraid to try any melody, within the chordal structure described.

"From any voice of any chord, a melody can begin." Joe Pass

A good melody will stand alone, with no chordal support - Think That Way.

Another powerful way to hear and understand chords and their relationship to the Soleares rhythm is to play just one chord and nothing else for the whole 12 beats, or even longer. Play the chord at different places within the measure and then wait and see what you hear, or what the music suggests to you.

I spend some time playing Soleares in other keys. I recommend that you do this, and notice how from key to key certain relationships are maintained. What are some of these? The rhythm is maintained, also relative cadences, even melody similarities. Always think of ways where the swinging feel can be brought out and maintained. Go back often and listen to what I said about the different elements. Some concepts are

harder to grasp than others, at first. With consistent practice they will reveal themselves to you. Listen to the solo I play, feeling the time and its relationship to the melody and then do the same thing yourself- conceptually not note for note.

### Alegrias

As we move to Alegrias, the procedure with the drum machine is the same as Soleares. I have you doing the right hand only, so that you will acquire a sense of the time before actually making music. The measure is the same length as solea, but the feel is slightly different. Here is the way we are hearing the drum machine today, with o being the accents.

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
		o				o	o		o		

As before, count along with me, and also by yourself, until you become familiar with the feel of the measure. By now, you have become more accustomed to such exercise! Gradually move away from having to count until, just as your telephone ring has a precise timing, so will your precision be accurate regarding the 12 beat measure.

Imitate the chords I show you and find any other chord equivalents you can. You may be more accustomed to melodies in a major key so take any one that you like and adapt it to the Alegrias time and feel. Spend time playing Alegrias in all the keys I suggest. This will broaden your concept of the form and give you many ideas of your own, which will inspire you to practice more. When listening to the solo that I play in the end of the program, try listening once with your eyes closed and hear the melody swings around the time. Go back to parts you cannot hear or understand. With repeated listening you will understand.

Here are some closing observations: practicing the guitar must be an act of loving surrender to the music . Practice means going over what you cannot do, until you can. "Speed" and strength are developed by practicing with a metronome or drum machine and strictly observing note value. Control your dynamics - play at a tempo where you are really playing a passage, not trying to play it, and above all, enjoy and love the music you play—

Guillermo Rios





**MASTERY OF THE FLAMENCO GUITAR SERIES**

**VOLUME III "TOQUES LIBRES"**

The Non-Rhythmic Flamenco Tradition

A study guide to accompany the video program, with definitions of how flamenco music is structured and learned.

Written by Guillermo Rios

## VOLUME III: MASTERY OF THE FLAMENCO GUITAR

Congratulations! You have just purchased a video production of which I am very proud. Your aficion and tireless work ethic will enable you to play some of the world's most beautiful guitar music with personal identity and conviction.

The purpose of this booklet is to guide your study of the “Torques Libres” as presented in my program. Please understand that flamenco music has always been taught on the one-on-one basis (teacher to student) and that the use of standard musical notation and/or tablature is a relatively recent event. In my opinion, its use as a teaching aid is limited by it's very nature - that the reader instinctively assumes that what he has learned via the scores is the only way to play music. Flamenco music is Spain has never been scored

and later played by other guitarists as written. We learn each other's music, music of the great maestros, or music that is required in a performance that we have arranged. It is committed to memory and we play it with the same precision and discipline as classical, jazz and other great musicians.

Our system of learning, however is different than their systems. Remember that just because it's strange at first does not mean that less discipline is required, or that there are no set musical rules of structure which must always be observed. At times, during this program, you may feel that I am becoming a little "abstract" - that is that the music appears to be lacking any recognizable rules. Again, have faith that the structure is there, even if you cannot perceive it right away.

In this program, I mention that no measured beat is apparent. One must understand that the absence of a beat implies that the melodic line and its harmonic support

must not depend on a rhythmic beat for its charm or clarity. Phrasing and melodic shapes achieve their own kind of rhythm, which we can feel even though there is no beat.

Over the years many of my students as well as flamenco music lovers have asked "Why does flamenco music have its own unique sound?" First, what we play on the guitar is inspired by songs whose name the selection we are playing bears. This song and its many variations are our main source of melodic inspiration. The chords which would harmonize the melody are derived from the chordal accompaniment of that particular song. The songs themselves have their roots in the riches of at least 5 ancient and modern cultures: East Indian, Jewish, Arab, European and Gypsy cultures. All this has been blended together to the wonderful world of flamenco.

The guitars' participation in flamenco is perhaps 150 years old and its evolution into the flamenco guitar of 1998 is nothing short of miraculous. Simple chordal accompaniment of the songs began to give way to small variations and contributions of a

variety of guitarists who had become wizards of accompaniment. Their creativity intrigued younger players who had something to say, too, and the explosion were in motion. Javier Molina, Ramon Montoya, Nino Ricardo and the most brilliant Agustin Castellon "Sabicas" were the men whose fanatical love of music, the guitar and flamenco singing was translated into guitar virtuosity and composition codifying flamenco guitar music for subsequent generations.

I had the singular good fortune to be a friend of Agustin Castellon "Sabicas" from 1972 to his death in 1990. His greatness as a refined and sensitive gentleman increased beyond measure my already boundless admiration for his artistry. He always was respectful of my love of flamenco, boundlessly generous with suggestions, hints, jokes, anecdotes, and profound musical wisdom. A great many things he told me took me years to fully understand what he had meant. My other teachers Juan Maya "Marote" and Pepe Habichuela helped me immeasurably and displayed the same deep

love of the music, gentlemanly grace and purity over the years which is always uplifting and joyous. -

On a recent trip to Spain, I was treated as an old friend and gracefully shown that even after all these years of the profession our learning and "discovery" of the vastness of music and this unique art is never over.

Enough will perhaps never be said of Paco de Lucia, our generations' most gifted guitarist. A disciple of Sabicas, Paco de Lucca's first teachers were his older brother, Ramon and Nino Ricordo. Paco's contributions in every aspect of playing the guitar are equal in grandeur to those of Sabicas. His love of the music, his creative genius and his astounding capacity to play his -music on the guitar are yet another miracle. He has inspired all subsequent generations of professionals and brought flamenco music to an audience, undreamable 25 years ago. We are all indebted to him.

I have included these remarks about the giants of the flamenco guitar tradition,

because all knowledge of flamenco is valuable and often it is not easy to encounter. I do not diminish anyone by not naming them here; indeed the flamenco guitarists of today are composing and recording their music within the deepest traditions of the art and it is extraordinarily beautiful. Listen to it all. Listen to recordings of the flamenco singers, Camaron de la Isla, Enrique Morente, El Torta. Hear how the songs are accompanied, how they carry the rhythm etc. Ask questions, and remember, there are no dumb questions.

As you watch and listen to the program—

I highly recommend listening and watching the entire program before actually studying the individual sections, just to capture the feel of my system. Then, with the guitar in your hands, imitate things that you hear easily. Try to orient yourself to the concepts that I am describing.

I recommend working in small sections - imitating a few chords at a time and rewinding as often as possible. Remember the meaning of dialogue - Having a conversation - It is important to remember that you want to be speaking musically with yourself, your listeners, or even between the upper and lower registers of the guitar.

A good way to get started with the melodic ideas is to sing them. Sing the notes out loud until you are sure that you have them correctly. When you do, you will be able to play them correctly on the guitar.

In this Tarantas I do an opening section using the technique called "Alzapua" - you can refer to volume I for a closer look at how to do this. Listen to how the thematic line develops. Sing one of your own and then find the notes here in this key and arrange, your own theme.

## **Granaina**

Note the new tonic key B major.

Remember that the variations I am playing are beautiful in their own right, but that they represent musical concepts as well. By rewinding and imitating with the guitar in your hand you will see the opening statements, connectors and thematic sections.

## **Mineras.**

I am playing 3 different keys here - A<sup>b</sup>, C<sup>#</sup> and E<sup>b</sup>. Follow along with me, reading my hands and rewinding as often as necessary. On the solo I play "Luna Mora," I bring in a "beat" of 3/4 time. This is to enhance or develop the main idea. It is a traditional way to play in these keys.

Try it yourself in any of the keys.

## **Malaguenas**

Here is a key you'll be more familiar with. Play along in small sections - Or take a chord, or melodic spot and make up your own variation.

## **Rondenass**

The opening piece on this video program is an arrangement of mine, a Rondenass. Experiment with this tuning, D A D F# B E "Rondena" tuning. You will find it very beautiful.

Final note: Listen to the solo I play which is a Tarantas. Try listening to the overall feel, as well as the individual notes and variations. After a while, switch off the television and play through the chords of any of the forms we have shared today. See how the chords suggest melodies or silence. Enter this beautiful labyrinth, you will always be rewarded with beauty and surprises!

Enjoy your new knowledge and never give up your dream of playing the flamenco guitar.

Guillermo Rios, 1998