



What's Between The Lines

Christopher Parkening • Leyenda

In the landscape of guitardom, the region of classical guitar is a rather lofty plateau. And at the highest reaches of that elevation, along with such legends as Andres Segovia, John Williams, and Julian Bream, you would find the residence of Christopher Parkening. Not only has Parkening mastered the greatest works for classical guitar, but he has also brought an original and fresh approach to both the traditional repertoire and "non-guitar" works by composers such as Poulenc, Debussy, and Satie.

"Leyenda" by Isaac Albanez can be found on Parkening's album *In the Spanish Style*. For newcomers to the world of classical guitar, this collection contains definitive performances by many of the greatest composers of the idiom. In addition to "Leyenda," Albanez's de rigueur "Maleguenia" (properly titled "Rumores de la Caleta") can be found on this album, along with music by Villa-Lobos, Tarrega, Sor, Ponce, and others. Just one listen to the opening bars of "Leyenda" will have most listeners nodding in recognition. The following arrangement is the one on which Parkening based his performance.

THE MAIN THEME

The melody that carries "Leyenda" along can be easily found by locating the notes played with the thumb (or "p," in classical finger-picking notation). The music notation shows these notes with stems pointing down. The dark, melancholy nature of the theme is maintained by playing these notes on the A and D strings, rather than the brighter D and G strings. The challenge to the performer is to keep this soft, dark melody in the forefront as the middle finger (notated as "m") alternates with the thumb on the open B string, a sonority that can easily sound too bright in

contrast. The theme is a four-measure phrase, establishing the piece's home key of E minor. The four-measure theme is repeated with a slight variation in the 8th measure; the melody notes A-F#-G-A-F#-G are replaced with a more continuously descending line of A-F#-G-E-D-C, leading to a low B in measure 9. The theme very nearly returns; now the low B replaces the original E and the melody is varied just enough to create a sense of heaviness and movement to E minor's dominant (or V) chord, B. The typical major-dominant chord of classical tradition is avoided, though, and the E natural minor scale (or E Aeolian mode) is established with the use of a D natural in measure 11. The theme in B is repeated, establishing a melodic theme that is very nearly repeated four times—twice with an E minor accompaniment, and twice with a B minor accompaniment.

At measure 17, the subtle fireworks begin. The open B string drone is ornamented with a B one octave higher (found on the high E string at the 7th fret) while the melody shifts more to the D and G strings. Listen to Parkening's performance and you will hear him deftly split the droning B into two distinct notes, as in **Fig. 1**. Also indicated here is Parkening's choice to move the opening melody note to the low open E, effectively widening the restatement of the theme with both higher and lower notes. At a metronome setting of about 120 beats per minute, this phrase alone sets the bar for "Leyenda" as a virtuoso showcase. The B minor portion of the theme also receives Parkening's brilliant, but subtle, reworking as he places the B major chord directly on the beat in measures 25-32.

The theme returns for another restatement at measure 33, this time with the E minor harmony created with natural harmonics at the

12th fret. In measure 37 the harmony moves to a C major chord, with an A# in the bass. The harmony is shifted to B major in measure 41, then back to C/A# in the proceeding measure. After shifting several times between these harmonies, a sense of release is finally attained as the dynamics recede and a kind of meandering examination of the theme occurs at measure 49. Finally, a blistering scalar run takes place at measures 59 and 60, and a true release begins.

THE RELEASE

The release begins at measure 63 with a stark, almost arhythmic theme centered around the chord B. The difficulty in performing this section is to maintain the listener's interest, to continue to engage the audience, after the rhythmic cascade of the first section. Parkening makes this task seem effortless, and he accomplishes it in several ways Parkening displays considerable restraint by playing this section in a starkly uncluttered style, with just a hint of fretting-hand vibrato, almost breath-like pauses, and subtle changes in his tone via picking attack, creating a pure reading of the music and allowing it to stand on its own.

The contemplative nature of the release section flows almost organically into a reflection upon the opening theme at measure 112, then drops back to a restatement of the release theme by measure 115. Parkening plays this section with an extremely bright attack, using his nails close to the bridge, then contrasts it with a dark final statement of the release theme. When he returns to the "head" (Da capo), Parkening's first note sounds so entwined with the previous (release) section that the sudden rush of rhythmic force is almost shocking.

The restatement of the opening material creates a sense of dark finality to the piece. When the run of artificial harmonics leads to the coda, the subsequent chords (measures 2-9 of the Coda) sound as an almost desperate return to the calm of "Leyenda's" middle section. The stark F major in the Coda's 6th measure, made all the more pronounced by Parkening's decision to play it with nails close to the bridge, leads to a B7 chord and the final statement of the theme, altered to come tumbling down to the final Em chords; the first played as delicate, angelic harmonics, the second and final played as dark, clay-like open strings. ☐

Fig. 1

The figure shows a musical notation for a guitar piece. It consists of a treble clef staff and a guitar tablature below it. The tablature is for strings A, B, and D. The A string has fret numbers 0, 7, 0, 7, 0, 7, 0, 7, 0, 7, 0, 7. The B string has fret numbers 0, 4, 0, 5, 0, 7, 0, 4, 0, 5, 0, 7. The D string has fret numbers 0, 7, 0, 4, 0, 5, 0, 7, 0, 4, 0, 5. The staff shows a melodic line with stems pointing down for the thumb (p) and stems pointing up for the middle finger (m). The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. The piece ends with "etc." in the staff.

LEYENDA

Arranged by Robert Phillips

Music by Isaac Albeniz

Fast

Gtr. I (nylon-str. acous.)

mp

T
A
B

0 0 0 0 0 0 | 0 0 0 0 0 0 | 0 0 0 0 0 0

7 9 10 7 9 10 | 7 9 10 7 9 10 | 7 9 10 7 9 10

0 0 0 0 0 0 | 0 0 0 0 0 0 | 0 0 0 0 0 0

7 9 10 7 9 10 | 7 9 10 7 9 10 | 7 9 10 7 9 10

0 0 0 0 0 0 | 0 0 0 0 0 0 | 0 0 0 0 0 0

7 9 10 7 9 10 | 7 9 10 7 10 8 | 7 9 10 7 9 9

0 0 0 0 0 0 | 0 0 0 0 0 0 | 0 0 0 0 0 0

7 9 10 7 9 9 | 7 9 7 9 10 12 | 9 10 7 9 10 9

0 0 0 0 0 0 | 0 0 0 0 0 0 | 0 0 0 0 0 0

7 9 10 7 9 9 | 7 9 10 7 9 9 | 7 9 10 12 9

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Leyenda

0 0 0 0 0 0 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7
10 7 9 10 7 9 7 4 5 0 7 0 7 0 7 4 0 5 7 0 7 0

7
7 4 5 7 4 5 7 4 5 7 4 5 7 4 5 7 4 5 7 4 5 7

7
7 4 5 7 4 5 7 4 5 7 4 5 7 4 5 7 4 0 7 0 7 0

7
9 9 10 7 9 9 9 9 10 7 9 9 9 9 7 9 10 12

0 0 0 0 0 0 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7
9 10 7 9 10 9 9 9 10 7 9 9 9 9 10 7 9 9 9 9 9

7
9 9 7 9 10 12 9 10 7 9 10 9 0 12 12 9 10 7 9 10

Leyenda

This page contains the guitar sheet music for the piece 'Leyenda'. It is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The music is organized into six systems, each consisting of a melodic line on a single staff and a corresponding fretboard diagram on a six-string staff. The fretboard diagrams use numbers 0-10 to indicate fingerings. The first system includes two instances of a 'Harm.' (harmonic) instruction, each with a small circle above the note and a vertical line indicating the fretting point. The piece features a complex, rhythmic melody with frequent sixteenth-note patterns and a bass line that provides harmonic support through various chord voicings and fingerings.

Leyenda

0 0 0 0 0 0 | 7 7 7 7 7 7 | 0 0 0 0 0 0

7 9 10 7 10 6 | 7 9 9 10 6 9 8 | 7 9 10 12 9 10

7 7 7 7 7 7 | 0 0 0 0 0 0 | 7 7 7 7 7 7

7 9 9 10 6 9 8 | 7 9 10 12 9 10 | 7 9 9 10 6 10 6

7 7 7 7 7 7 | 7 7 7 7 7 7 | 7 7 7 7 11 11 14 14 19

9 10 6 10 9 8 7 | 7 6 6 9 9 9 8 8 | 0 8 7 7 7 7 11 11 14 14 19

To Coda ⊕

(19) 12 11 13 14 | 7 5 7 10 | 7 8 7 5 7 | H.H. 2(14)

9 7 9 7 | 9 7 9 | 4 4 4 2

7 5 7 10 | 7 8 7 5 7 | H.H. 7(19) | 7 6 3 5 3 2 0 3

9 7 9 7 | 9 7 9 | 9 8 | 5 4 2 5

H.H. 2(14) | 7 8 7 6 2 3 5 3 2 0 2 2 | 5 4 4 4

9 10 9 8 4 5 4 2 5 4 | 5 4 4 4

