

Douglas Niedt's GUITAR TECHNIQUE TIP OF THE MONTH

Yes, it's "Doug's Dirty Little Secrets"



I subtitled my Tech Tip "Doug's Dirty Little Secrets" after reading someone's posted message on a guitar web forum. The writer asserted that professional virtuoso guitarists all had secrets they kept to themselves and wouldn't tell anyone else, so no one would play as well as them!



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It contains ALL of Doug's Previous
Guitar Technique Tips of the Month

A Christmas Gift For You. *Silent Night*

By Douglas Niedt

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For my November technique tip, I always enjoy giving a little Christmas gift to my fellow guitarists. I am giving it to you now so you have time to learn it by Christmas. It is an arrangement of *Silent Night*. I have made it easy enough that it won't be too much of a struggle to learn.

The Story Behind the Carol

Silent Night

Music by Franz Gruber
Words by Joseph Mohr

The story of the creation of *Silent Night* has been passed down from generation to generation. Though scholars find no solid evidence for some details of the narrative, it is a fascinating account.

It was December of 1818, during a particularly cold winter in the Austrian Alps. Twenty-six-year-old village priest Joseph Mohr was making last-minute preparations for a special Christmas Eve mass at St. Nicholas Church. Everything from music to message was in place. But as he cleaned and readied the sanctuary, he encountered a serious problem: St. Nicholas' organ would not play. A frantic Mohr struggled with the old instrument, but in spite of his efforts, the organ remained silent.

Realizing nothing could be done, he prayed for inspiration. He was suddenly reminded of a

Christmas poem he had written two years earlier. Digging *Stille Nacht! heilige Nacht!* from his desk, Mohr reread the words. The poem was perfect for the Christmas Eve midnight mass, now just hours away.

He hurried through the snow-covered streets to Franz Gruber's drafty apartment over the town schoolhouse. Gruber played the organ at St. Nicholas, and was also a talented composer. The distressed priest explained his dilemma. Showing him the poem, he asked Franz to write a melody with guitar accompaniment for his words—music simple enough that could be learned by the choir that night.

A few hours later, the two friends met at St. Nicholas. There, in the candlelit sanctuary, Gruber shared his new music with Mohr. The priest approved, and after learning the guitar chords, whisked the music off to the choir members, who were waiting for their rehearsal.

Just after midnight, Mohr and Gruber stood in front of the main altar and introduced their song. As they sang, they couldn't have guessed that *Silent Night* would be remembered not only the next Christmas in their small village, but almost two hundred years later, around the world.

Gruber's simple but beautiful music blended perfectly with the spirit of Mohr's words. And why Joseph Mohr selected a guitar accompaniment for his hymn is not known, but the choice was fortunate. The image of the starry sky, the little church, and the lone guitar is one of enduring humility and quiet beauty.

And Now, The Arrangement

Silent Night

Franz Gruber
arr. Douglas Niedt

Natural Harmonics -----

7th fret 12th fret 7th fret 12th fret 7th fret 12th fret 7th fret

4 7th fret 12th fret 7th fret

7 3 0 3 0

10 0 4 2 4 2 3

13 3 0 3 0 3 0

Silent Night

Franz Gruber
arr. Douglas Niedt

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Natural Harmonics -----

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