

Douglas Niedt, Guitarist: Official Website



Douglas Niedt, Guitarist: Official Website

GUITAR TECHNIQUE TIP OF THE MONTH

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

(Doug subtitled his Tech Tip as "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!)



[BE SURE TO VISIT DOUG'S "SECRET VAULT"](#)

of Dirty Little Secrets.

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

Interval and Chord Balance Part 2 (of 4)

By Douglas Niedt

Copyright Douglas Niedt, All Rights Reserved. This article may be reprinted, but please be considerate and give credit to Douglas Niedt.

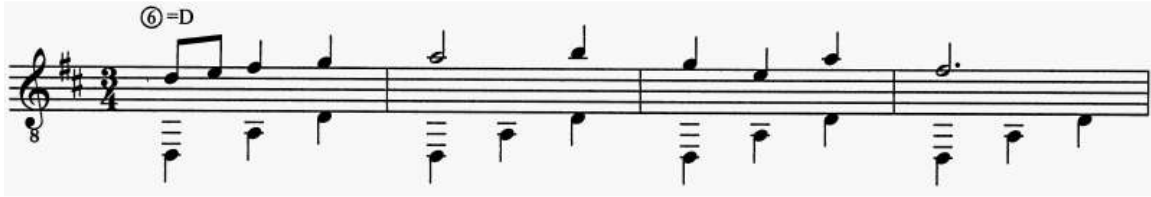
You are on DouglasNiedt.com

In last month's technique tip, I discussed exercises and techniques to learn to control the volume of each note of an interval independently. Therefore, if you are studying say, Galileo's *Saltarello* (from Chilesotti's *Six Lute Pieces of the Renaissance*), you should now be able to control the balance between the upper melodic part and the ostinato bass:

You are on DouglasNiedt.com

Example No.1:

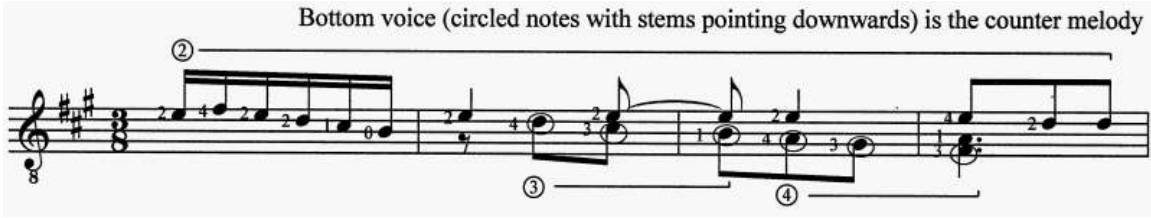
Measures 1-4. *Saltarello* by V. Galileo



If your teacher tells you, or you yourself notice that the bass notes are overriding the upper part, you should be able to adjust your touch to produce whatever balance you desire. Or, on *Prelude No.2* by Manuel Ponce (from *Preludes 1-6*):

Example No. 2:

Measures 1-4. *Prelude No. 2* by Manuel Ponce



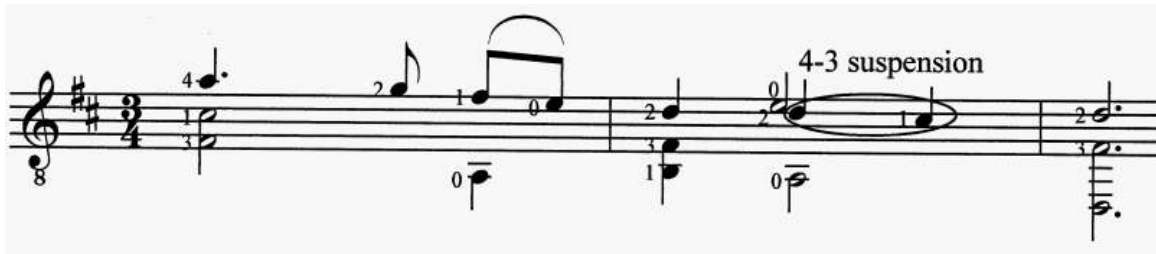
You should be able (no matter what right hand fingering you use) to bring out the short counter-melodies in measures two and three (and similarly measures six and seven).

In the *Pavan* in A Minor by Gaspar Sanz you should now be able to play the notes E and G in the bass line quite a bit louder than the C and B above them and match the volume of the E and G with the volume of the other single bass notes around them:

You are on DouglasNiedt.com

Example No. 3:

Measures 20-22. *Pavan* by Gaspar Sanz.

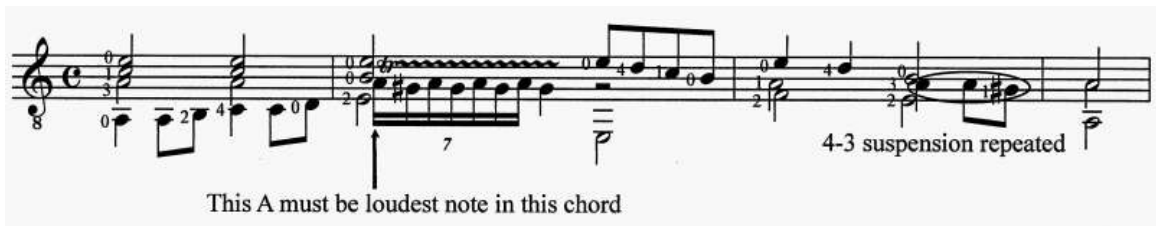


The D to the C sharp is a 4-3 suspension which is a very common type in early music. Keep in mind that suspensions almost always serve as focal or climatic points of phrases. Not only is the D to be played louder than the E above and A below, but it should be accented as well.

A striking example of the importance of chordal balance occurs in the *Pavanas in A minor* by Gaspar Sanz:

Example No. 7:

Measures 1-4. *Pavanas* by Gaspar Sanz.



The trill occurs in the tenor voice and is played with i. The fact that the trilled notes comprise a 4-3 suspension above the root of the chord (the note E) indicates the trill's harmonic importance which is underscored by the repetition of a 4-3 suspension at the end of a phrase. Therefore, it is imperative that the note A, which begins the trill, be clearly played as the dominating tone the moment the chord is struck. (It should be pointed out that another technique using the thumb to play the initial note A of the trill could be used to balance the chord correctly. (This technique will be discussed in Part 3.)

You are on DouglasNiedt.com

Examples such as these and countless others can be found where inner notes and voices of three and four-note textures must be clearly brought out. But even more common is the situation where the pristine melody sings in the upper voice:

Example No. 8:

Chorus. *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring* by J.S. Bach.



But the player must decide exactly what the balance is to be. Will the soprano be heard almost to the exclusion of the other parts? Or just slightly louder? The important thing to remember is that with the ability to alter the balance of a chord at will, you can now make a choice and execute it. You have a new technique you can use to add variety, intelligence, and vitality to your playing. Next month (Part 3) I will discuss some special balancing techniques involving the thumb.