

Douglas Niedt's GUITAR TECHNIQUE TIP OF THE MONTH

Your free classical guitar lesson



I'm Douglas Niedt and these are my very detailed, in-depth, how to play the classical guitar technique tips, many with high def classical guitar videos. Almost like free guitar lessons.

Guitar scales? How to play bar chords? Harmonics? Looking for a classical guitar practicing routine? Tips on performing onstage? How to tune a guitar? Even easy Christmas arrangements? Chances are, I've covered it, or will soon. The tips are free.



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of Dirty Little Secrets.

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

A Christmas Gift For You.

Christmas Sheet Music for Guitar

We Three Kings

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For my November technique tip, I always enjoy giving a little Christmas gift of Christmas sheet music for guitar to my fellow guitarists. I am giving this Christmas song to you now so you have time to learn it by Christmas. It is a classical guitar arrangement of *The First Noel*. I have made the arrangement for classical guitar easy enough that it won't be too much of a struggle to learn.

The Story Behind the Christmas Carol

We Three Kings

Lyrics edited by William B. Sandys and Davies Gilbert

"We three kings of Orient are, bearing gifts we traverse afar," goes the famous Christmas carol, but from where? Little is known about the Magi, or three wise men as they've come to be known. Over 2,000 years later, the three kings remain one of the great mysteries of Christ's nativity.

The Three Kings, or as they are commonly known, the Three Wise Men or Wisemen, have long been one of the most mysterious aspects of Christ's nativity. They are mentioned in Matthew's Biblical nativity but not Luke's, and Matthew refers to them, without number, as Magi. In the words of the Church of England, "the visitors were not necessarily wise and not necessarily men." So who exactly were these Magi?

We Three or 12 Astrologers or Magicians

Many traditions surround the Magi. Some people believe that Matthew's nativity is intended to be symbolic rather than literal. But those who believe in the real existence of the Three Kings have put great effort into uncovering their origins.

What is known for sure is that the Magi were followers of the Zoroastrian religion. The word Magi is a complicated one and has been translated many ways, including shaman, sorcerer, wizard, and astrologer. It is also the source of the English words magic and magician.

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Zoroastrianism was originally a Persian religion, but in a form of Zoroastrianism known as Zurvanism, Magi was the specific title of a priestly caste that paid great attention to astrology. As Babylon was the center of Zurvanism, some people believe the Magi came from there rather than Persia.

Some traditions embrace both the symbolic and literal aspects of the Three Wise Men story. The "Three Kings" were seen as real-life symbols of worldwide submission to Christ's rule, and under the names Balthasar, Gaspar/Casper, and Melchior, were reported to be the kings of Arabia, India, and Persia, respectively.

Yet the number three is not found in Matthew's nativity. Eastern traditions put the number of Magi visitors at 12. Although there is no scriptural basis for stating dogmatically that there were three wise men, the belief in Three Wisemen stems solely from Matthew's mention of gold, frankincense, and myrrh as gifts to the holy family. Master artists throughout the centuries have depicted three wise men on camels as one of their favorite nativity themes.

The number of wise men is not important, but the fact that they persisted in following the light that was given them until they found the object of their search, that they responded in worship, and that they returned home to share their experience with others all has much to tell us. Also, the gifts presented to the Christ child were both significant and appropriate: gold, symbolic of His kingly reign; frankincense, symbolic of His priestly ministry; myrrh, symbolic of our redemption through His death.

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Following Yonder Planet

The star of Bethlehem that the Three Wise Men were said to follow has also caused great speculation. Skeptics have pointed out that a star would be too high in the sky to indicate a particular town or house, but this has not prevented astronomers from seeking a real-life astronomical event that could have coincided with Christ's nativity.

Some believers in the literal truth of Matthew's nativity story have dismissed astronomy altogether and claimed the Bethlehem star was a one-time miracle. Others have pointed out that the Greek word used, *anatole*, means star rising, suggesting the possibility that the Bethlehem star was actually a planet. Around 2 or 3 B.C. there were several pairings of planets such as Venus and Jupiter that would have produced great visual interest for astronomers such as the Magi. However, the death of King Herod is set at around 4 or 5 B.C., which would disrupt the continuity of Matthew's nativity story.

Spiritual Symbols

Whatever their number or origin, the Three Kings have become a fundamental part of traditional outdoor nativity scenes. They can be seen as eternal spiritual symbols, or as a mysterious complement to the gospel of Luke's more detailed nativity story. Having endured in our memory, the Three Wise Men certainly deserve their place alongside the holy family.

The Composer

Reverend John Henry Hopkins, Jr., from Pennsylvania, was an author, book illustrator, stained glass window designer, Episcopalian minister and editor of the New York Church Journal. He wrote *We Three Kings* for an 1857 Christmas pageant put on by the General Theological Seminary of New York City. In 1863, he also published the Christmas Carol in his book *Carols, Hymns and Song*. Hopkins has been credited with contributing much to the development of music in his denomination during the nineteenth century, writing a number of fine hymns and hymn tunes.

And Now, The Arrangement

[This is my classical guitar arrangement of *We Three Kings* for you to print out.](#)

[Listen to me play the arrangement.](#) Make sure you listen to the WHOLE clip. I stop part of the way through to explain an alternative way to play it, and then continue on.

(A separate window will open that you can minimize in order to still see the written musical example as you listen.)

Merry Christmas. Enjoy!

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