

CONCERTINO (HAMBURG, GERMANY) 3/11 REVIEW

***Contemporary Anthology of Solo Guitar Music for Five Fingers of the Right Hand*, Edited by Charles Postlewate, Mel Bay Publications, MB21290.**

Charles Postlewate and Leonhard Beck previously published a book of nineteenth-century studies for a technique using all five-fingers of the right hand. This new anthology of more than 150 pages includes contemporary music with many small and large studies as well as characteristic pieces, a number of them written in cyclic form. Some composers are from Latin America (Ernesto Cordero, Carlos Dorado, Ricardo Iznaola, and Luis Zea), others from the U.S. or Canada (Charles Postlewate, Jim Ferguson, James Lentini, John Hall, and John Oliver), and also from Europe (Englishman Gerald Garcia, Irishman David Flynn, and Germans Burkhard Wolters and Mirko Schrader). It is no surprise then that all the short biographies and notes on the works are presented in both English and Spanish. Those who wish to learn more about each artist can explore the respective websites. Editor Postlewate also makes an appearance as a composer. His many previous works (including a DVD) on the five finger technique are well-known. Flamenco guitarists are more familiar with the use of all fingers than the classical guitarists, who (if any) often only exercise the little finger (C) of the right hand.

These studies and pieces have different types of applications. They may be an alternative to the *pima* technique – for example replacing the conventional fingering in playing scales. The objective in *Blues at Four* by Postlewate is to play chromatic scale groups of four notes with a tremolo-like *pami*, and crossing to a higher strings using *cami* (Narciso Yepes also liked to play scales with a tremolo). A true tremolo sound, continuous without interruption, can be found in *Blues for Five*, where the thumb plays bass notes with *cami* playing a melody. Quite often repeated chords can be played with *imac* to relieve excessive thumb work, as in *Leo's Blues* (Ferguson) or "Minimal Study VIa" (Schrader).

A very important thing to consider: there are very many ways to use the little finger, and *Fantasy Etude*" (Garcia), *The Clown Sings* (Iznaola), *Fall Reflections* (Lentini), *Sea Spray* (Oliver), *By The Seashore* (Wolters) and *Preludio* (Zea) are only a few examples in this fine collection. If certain right hand patterns are repeated continuously in folkloric pieces (as in the *Etudes* by Flynn), their use within this compositional technique are put to good use. Works by Cordero, Dorado, and Hall are entitled "Etudes," but are very rewarding musical experiences and function as miniature characteristic pieces that achieve similar effects.

When playing through this music we easily come to the following conclusions: technical comparisons can be made to known guitar works, and it is certainly more fun to train the little finger on these quite interesting pieces rather than on boring gymnastic exercises. This book offers a very rich collection of good music from the pens of experienced and successful composers! But if you insist on playing with only four fingers, you can still profit from this book. Even though it may not be what the composers had in mind, the music still works fine!

Thomas Bittermann