

Gymnopédie No. 1

Music by Erik Satie, arranged by Teja Gerken



Written in 1888, the three piano pieces entitled “Trois Gymnopédies” are probably French composer Erik Satie’s most famous works. Satie (1866–1925) began writing music in his teens, and while his later work reflected his increasing eccentricity, the Gymnopédies (most likely named after the Gymnopaïdai festival of ancient Sparta) are among his most accessible pieces. A close

friend of Claude Debussy and Pablo Picasso, Satie was on a quest to find new horizons in modern music, and is today considered to have been at the forefront of the Impressionist movement. Of the “Trois Gymnopédies,” the first piece of the suite is perhaps the most recognizable. Not only is it part of the standard classical piano

repertoire, it has also been adapted by many jazz ensembles, and it falls nicely under the fingers on guitar.

“Gymnopédie No. 1” works equally well on nylon- or steel-string guitar. There are no particularly difficult sections, but the piece’s contemplative nature makes it important to let all the notes ring out cleanly and change hand positions with a minimum of string noise. It’s important to make the melody notes stand out, as they’re easily overpowered by some of the chords played on the same beat. The Am chord in measure 21 and the Bm in measure 32 require a bit of a fretting-hand stretch and may take a little extra practice. Resist the temptation to play the F#m7 in measure 34 as a barre chord; doing so will make it difficult to play the open first-string melody note. Given Satie’s penchant for experimentation, I often take the liberty of electronically looping the main theme’s Dmaj7–Amaj7 chord progression as a foundation for improvisation.

—TEJA GERKEN

ACOUSTIC GUITAR TAB for *Gymnopédie No. 1* by Erik Satie, arranged by Teja Gerken. The piece is in 3/4 time with a tempo of 76 bpm. The key signature is two sharps (D major).

The arrangement is divided into three systems of music, each with a treble clef staff and a guitar tablature staff. Chord names are indicated above the treble staff, and fret numbers are shown on the tablature lines (E, A, D, G, B, E from top to bottom).

System 1 (Measures 1-8): Chords include Dmaj7, Amaj7, Dmaj7, Amaj7, Dmaj7, Amaj7, and Dmaj7. The tablature shows fingerings for the bass line, including a 4-finger barre on the D string in measure 1.

System 2 (Measures 9-15): Chords include Amaj7, Dmaj7, Amaj7, Dmaj7, Amaj7, Dmaj7, Amaj7, and Dmaj7. The tablature continues the bass line with various fingerings.

System 3 (Measures 16-22): Chords include Amaj7, C#m, F#m, Bm, Bm7, Am, Em, and A11. The tablature shows more complex fingerings, including a 4-finger barre on the D string in measure 16.

Chord progression: A13, A9, A7, Am7, 1/2 B VIII, A9, A7

Chord progression: 1. Bm, C#m, F#m7, B13, Bm11, Em, A

Chord progression: 2. Bm, Am/B, BV, Bm7, Em, Am

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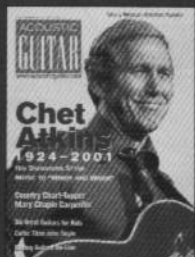
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