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## Integrated Approach for Classical Guitar Method

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### Abstract

The aim of this research project was to develop an integrated approach of classical guitar method based on the international graded examination syllabus. The development of classical guitar method was intended to unite various learning resources, so the learning is expected to be effective, efficient and less difficult. The data examined were in the form of literatures related to traditional classical guitar method, International graded examination syllabus and Malaysian traditional songs. The classical guitar method analyzed were by Sor (1778 -1839); Aguado (1784-1849), Carcassi (1792 – 1853) and Tárrega (1852 –1909). Meanwhile level of competency for grade 1,2 and 3 of ABRSM and Trinity international are applied. The inclusion of Malaysian traditional songs is an effort to preserve and respect local values. The products of this research are in the form of Classical guitar method book accompanied by a tutorial video, which are useful as learning and teaching materials for independent learning as well as regular lessons.

**Keywords:** Integrated Approach Guitar Method , Classical Guitar Method, Classical Guitar Syllabus

### Introduction

The basic assumptions about a musical instrument's method are related to typical practices and repertoires. Quite often, the level of competency to be achieved and the performance of compulsory repertoires has caused the essence of the methods to be ignored. The basic concept of the musical instrument method itself is a compilation of musical practice. Hallam (1997a) defines musical practice as a multi-faceted activity. She suggests that an important dimension of learning to practice concerns how well a student is able to develop technical skills, music interpretation, ability to play from memory and to overcome performance stress. These technical, cognitive and performance skills cannot be acquired by repetition alone. Therefore, it is important that teachers continue to offer practical advice on how to practice differently at various stages of learning. However, according to Boardman (1988), music instruction cannot be based on a specific learning theory. Isbell (2011) agrees with this statement, "There is no single explanation regarding how best to teach music" (p. 23).

The above understanding leads us to the tenet that a method must integrate various aspects. These aspects are usually sourced from various learning materials. This research aimed to build the classical guitar method by choosing various sources of related teaching materials as the basis for analysis. In this respect, the traditional classical guitar methods such as Sor, Aguado, Carcassi and Tarrega are basic references in developing the method book. The method was designed for beginner level. As a benchmark, we referred to the existing system of the international graded examination. For the purpose of this research project, the structure of the classical guitar method developed was based on traditional classical guitar methods, competency-based on international graded examination, and local components that is Malaysian traditional songs.

The teaching and learning of classical guitar that has existed, is very depending on various sources in the traditional classical guitar method. This leads to an implementation of teaching and learning to be more ineffective and inefficient. Therefore, this motivated us to develop methods by integrating various source of learning. Thus, this research is expected to have a contribution in teaching and learning classical guitar to be more effective and efficient.

### **Background of Study**

Classical guitar education activities in Malaysia are concentrated in private music schools. The Syllabus used is based on International graded examination system such as ABRSM and Trinity. The teaching materials are sourced from many classical guitar methods. Sor (1778 -1839), Aguado (1784-1849), Carcassi (1792 –1853) and Tárrega (1852 –1909) are the pioneers of classical guitar methods. Fernando Sor bequeathed great legitimacy to classical guitar, Grunfeld (1969) stated that:

“Sor’s crowning achievement is his *Méthode pour la Guitare* of 1830, easily the most remarkable book on guitar technique ever written” (p. 182).

According to Jeffery (2004) Aguado’s *method Escuela de guitarra* was published in Spain. It addresses subjects such as the concept and nature of the instrument, the suitability of a place in terms of guitar performance. He has a major contribution to determine idiomatic classical guitar as composition and performance. Matteo Carcassi is well-known with, *Method Complete pour la Guitare* (1836). According to Alves, Júlio Ribeiro (2015), this method has been used since its inception to the present, in addition to its repertoire representing the beginner and intermediate levels.

Francisco Tarrega (1852-1909) has a huge contribution to the development of the classical guitar. His contribution is not only limited to pedagogy but also creating works for original compositions or transcription for classical guitar. It took a long time for Tárrega to systematize the basic principles of playing guitar during the process of reformulating guitar techniques. During Tarrega’s period, the aesthetic side of the guitar as in instrument was introduced. Tarrega's method emphasize the speed and strength of the fingers. It requires intensive and consistent practice over a long period of time. The Tarrega’s method is broadly more suitable for applications in conservatories.

However, it is important to understand in the era of classical period, method books are not only oriented towards pedagogy but more to artistic development. In the learning context, etudes are the

exclusive artistic works of each instrument. However, the fundamental problem with classical guitar method as identified by Renthungo (2010) through his observation is the lack of adequate teaching methods for beginners. Similarly, Andres Segovia (1953) stated:

Recognized this when he wrote the thoughtful musician who reviews the history of the guitar from its earliest beginnings cannot but be surprised at the lack of a practical system of studies and exercises coordinated in such a way as to permit the faithful student to progress continually from the first easy lessons to real mastery of the instrument (p. 1).

In the history of traditional classical guitar method, the material of learning in the form of etude and repertoires involves many elements of localized traditional tunes or rhythm pattern such as waltz, mazurka or polka. On the other hand, international graded examination curriculum uses localized traditional components of songs either in the form of pieces or the traditional rhythm concept such as tango and bolero. Related to the above, the learning method should be able to accommodate traditional songs so that learning materials would have synergy with local values. According to Choksy (1974):

“Zoltan Kodaly became concerned about the lack of musical literacy in his native home, with the reason Kodaly felt that a child should learn the folk songs of his native country before other music, the simple forms, basic pentatonic scales and comprehensible language of folk songs were well suited for children; and Folk music is not contrived for pedagogical purposes, but is a living art in itself”.

### **Objective**

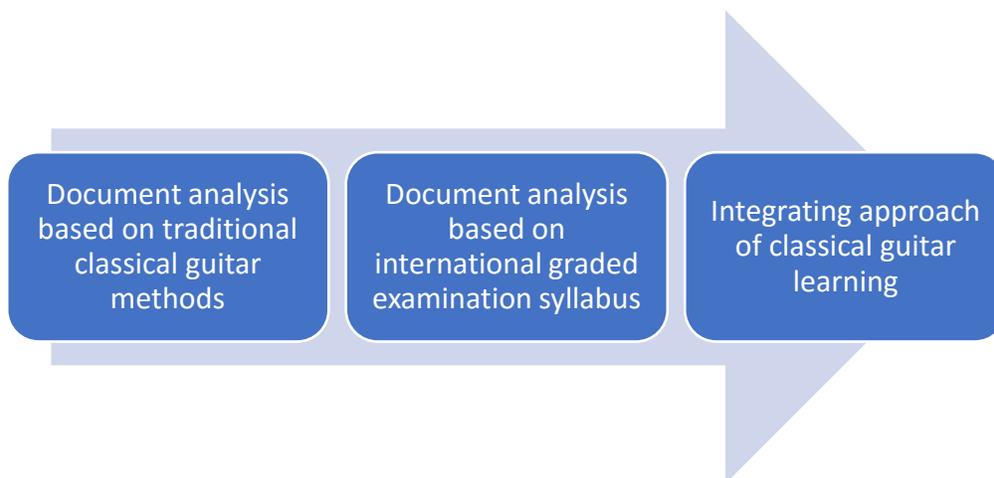
The objectives of this research project are as follows:

- i. To identify traditional Classical guitar methods
- ii. To identify competencies to be achieved at the various grades/ levels international classical guitar graded examination syllabus
- iii. To gather and select Malaysian folk tunes as teaching materials for localized classical guitar method
- iv. To develop and evaluate an integrated approach for classical guitar method based on international graded examination syllabus

### **Methodology**

The research employed qualitative paradigm assumptions. The data examined were in the form of literature related to traditional classical guitar method, International graded examination syllabus and Malaysian traditional song using the inductive approach. The classical guitar method analyzed were by Sor, Aguado, Carcassi, and Tarrega. Meanwhile level of competency for grade 1,2 and 3 of ABRSM and Trinity College of Music, is applied.

Figure 1 shows the methodology for developing integrated approach of classical guitar method book



**Figure 1 methodology for developing integrated approach of classical guitar method book**

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

**Traditional classical guitar methods**

Table 1 shows the structure of the traditional classical guitar methods

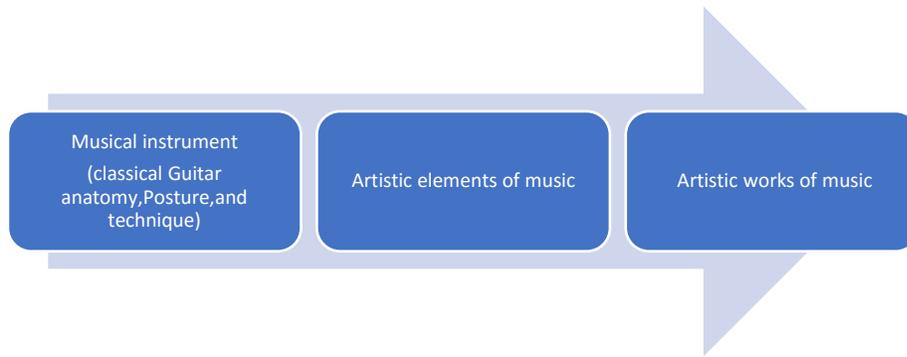
Method Books	Sight reading	Organizing materials	Variety of pieces	Summary
Fernando Sor <i>Method for the Spanish Guitar</i>	The practice of sight reading is based on fingerboard harmony.	Practice is organized in the form of textures, interval, Alberti's bass, chords inversion and there is no specific discussion about scales and arpeggios	Pieces in the form of homophonic and polyphonic textures and the concept of harmonies represent Classic Period	Systematically, The Sor's method is more focused on practical matters from pieces and etudes. The Sor's method is built based on artistic approach.
Dionisio Aguado <i>Nuevo Metodo para Guitarra</i>	The practice of sight reading is implemented based on chromatic and diatonic concept	Practice is organized in the form of textures and rhythms with single line melody. Scales discussion based on chromatic and diatonic	Pieces in the form of homophonic and polyphonic textures and the concept of harmonies represent Classic Period	Systematically, The Aguado's method is built based on a technical approach.

		concept on finger board harmony		
Mateo Carcassi <i>Méthode complete pour la guitar, op.59</i>	The practice of sight reading is implemented based on fingerboard harmony, and time signature	Practice is organized in the form of etudes.	Pieces in the form of homophonic textures and the concept of harmonies represent Classic Period	Systematically, the Carcassi's method is built based on harmony consideration in classical guitar.
Francisco Tarrega <i>Metodo Moderno Para Guitarra</i>	There is no discussion about sight reading	Practice is organized in the form of etudes.	Pieces in the form of homophonic and polyphonic textures with the concept of harmony represent Romantic period and a classical guitar idiomatically. Pieces is not limited to original guitar composition but a lot of transcription.	Systematically, The Tarrega's method is built based on the the difficulties level of the pieces and repertoires.

**Table 1 the structure of the traditional classical guitar methods**

The structure of the traditional classical guitar methods above illustrates that the methods are not intended for beginner level. The approach used is more artistic rather than methodical. This will be very difficult for students who are just learning classical guitar instruments. However, the original compositions of the classical guitar were formed in the traditional classical guitar method. The artistic approach is a representation of how classical guitar deals with music.

Figure 2 shows The hierarchy of learning based on the traditional classical guitar methods



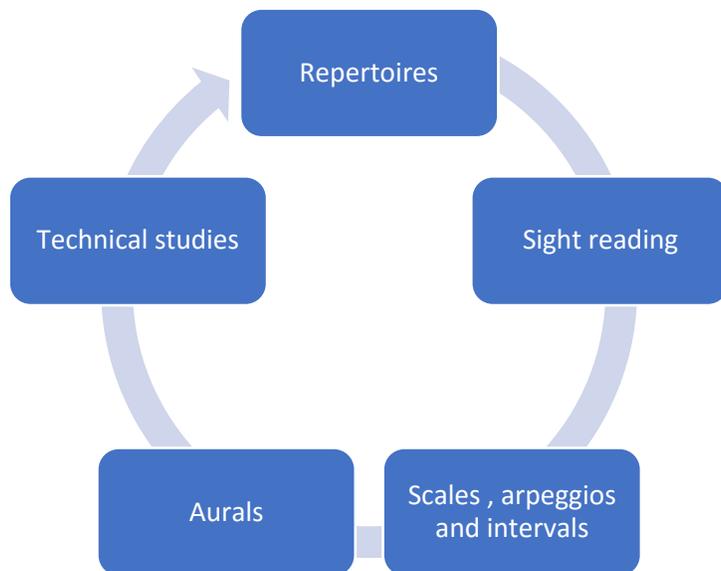
**Figure 2 the hierarchy of learning based on the traditional classical guitar methods**

### **International Graded Examination syllabus**

According to (Coats, 2006) “The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music provides an examination program for all who play musical instruments and provides goals, assessment, and certification of progress at each stage of their development. The Associated Board, which was established in 1889, has the authority of the four leading conservatories in the United Kingdom: the Royal Academy of Music, the Royal College of Music, the Royal Northern College of Music, and the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. Examination centers are established all over the world with the Associated Board hiring and training the adjudicators. The program is divided into a prep test and grades 1-8. Each grade contains a theory exam. The Practical Musicianship exam includes singing melodies, transposing, and improvising. The Piano Practical exams include prescribed lists of repertoire, an aural exam, sight reading, scales, chords, and arpeggios. A complete copy of the syllabus is posted online”.

Trinity College London provides examinations at sites in England as well as Malaysia, India, South Africa, Ceylon, New Zealand, and Australia. Examinations are held twice a year, and candidates are required to play three pieces and take tests in technical work, scales arpeggios sight reading, and aural awareness. The achievement guidelines are intended to help teachers choose repertoire and prepare students for performance with regard to the examiner's expectation (Coats, 2006).

The system-grade setting that has been designed by ABRSM and Trinity measures the achievement of repertoire, scale, aural and sight reading for each grade. Materials or commonly called ABRSM and Trinity exam pieces is a combination of the existing repertoire of traditional classical guitar methods and contemporary works. Figure 3 shows the framework international graded examination syllabus.



**Figure 3 the framework international graded examination syllabus**

Table 2 shows the structure of international graded examination syllabus grade 1,2 and 3

Institutions and Grades	Scales and arpeggios	Sight reading	Techniques	Pieces from traditional classical guitar method
ABRSM Grade 1	Scales : G & F major one octave A & E natural and harmonic minor one octave Arpeggios : G & E minor one octave	C major key signature in first position		F.Sor : etude op.60 no.1 etude Op.51 no 1 Aguado Leccion
Trinity Grade 1	Scales : C & F major one octave E natural minor one octave Arpeggios : C,F Major & E minor one octave	C major key signature in first position	Studies are based on Tone & phrasing Articulation idiomatic elements	Kufner : Andantino op.80
ABRSM Grade 2	Scales: C major one octave D major, A natural or harmonic minor one octave Chromatic scales starting on A one	C and G major key signatures in first position		Aguado : Valse in G  F.Sor : etude op.60 no.2 Giuliani etude op.33 no.10

	<p>octave</p> <p>Arpeggios:</p> <p>C,D majors,</p> <p>A,D minors</p>			
<p>Trinity</p> <p>Grade 2</p>	<p>Scales:</p> <p>F major one octave</p> <p>D melodic minor one octave</p> <p>Chromatic scale on G one octave</p> <p>Arpeggios:</p> <p>A harmonic minor one octave,</p> <p>F major one octave</p> <p>D melodic minor one octave</p>	<p>C and G major key signatures in first position</p>	<p>Studies are based on</p> <p>Tone &amp; phrasing</p> <p>Articulation</p> <p>idiomatic elements</p>	<p>F.Sor :</p> <p>Etude op.44 no.1</p>
<p>ABRSM</p> <p>Grade 3</p>	<p>Scales:</p> <p>A and G major two octave</p> <p>B harmonic minor two octave</p> <p>E melodic minor two octave</p> <p>Chromatic scales starting on D one octave</p> <p>Interval scales</p> <p>F major in sixth one octave</p> <p>Broken Chord G major one octave</p> <p>Arpeggios:</p> <p>G,A major &amp; E,B minor two octave</p>	<p>F major, D and E minor in first and second positions</p>		<p>F.Sor :</p> <p>Etude op.35 no.2</p> <p>Giuliani</p> <p>etude op.50 no.15</p>
<p>Trinity</p> <p>Grade 3</p>	<p>Scales:</p> <p>C &amp; A major two octave</p> <p>B natural minor two octave</p> <p>C major scales in thirds one octave</p> <p>Arpeggios:</p>	<p>F major, D and E minor in first and second positions</p>	<p>Studies are based on</p> <p>Tone &amp; phrasing</p> <p>Articulation</p> <p>idiomatic elements</p>	<p>F.Sor :</p> <p>Etude op.35 no.1</p> <p>Etude op.60 no.10</p> <p>Carcassi :</p> <p>Allegretto</p>

	E harmonic minor two octave C & A major two octave			
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***Table 2 the structure of international graded examination syllabus grade 1, 2 and 3***  
**A comparison between the traditional classical guitar method and the international graded examination syllabus.**

Table 3 shows a comparison between the traditional classical guitar method and the international graded examination syllabus

	ABRSM	TRINITY	F.Sor	Carcassi	Aguado	Tarrega
Sight reading	The learning sequences are implemented based on key signatures	The learning sequences are implemented based on key signatures and positions.	The practice of sight reading is implemented based on fingerboard harmony	The practice of sight reading is implemented based on fingerboard harmony, and time signature	The practice of sight reading is implemented based on chromatic and diatonic concept	There is no discussion about sight reading
Scales and arpeggios	Scales, arpeggios, and intervals are based on key signatures	Scales, arpeggios, and intervals are based on key signatures and fingerboard harmony.	There is no discussion about scales	Scales, arpeggios, and intervals are based on key signatures and positions.	Scales, arpeggios, and intervals are based on positions.	There is no discussion about scales
Techniques	Symbol and right hand techniques	Studies are based on <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tone &amp; phrasing</li> <li>2. Articulation</li> <li>3. idiomatic elements</li> </ol>	Guitar anatomy, postures, textures and Alberti's bass	Guitar anatomy Scales, arpeggios and etudes based on key signatures	Guitar anatomy Scales, arpeggios and etudes based on Fingerboard harmony	Practice is organized in the form of etudes.
Variety of Pieces			Pieces in the form of homophonic and polyphonic textures and the concept of harmonies represent Classic Period	Pieces in the form of homophonic textures and the concept of harmonies represent Classic Period	Pieces in the form of homophonic and polyphonic textures and the concept of harmonies represent Classic Period	Pieces in the form of homophonic and polyphonic textures with the concept of harmony represent Romantic period and a classical guitar Idiomatically. Pieces is not limited to original guitar composition but a lot of transcription.

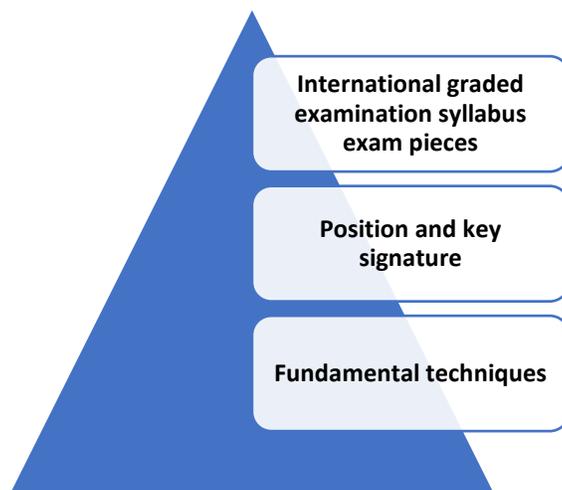
***Table 3 a comparison between the traditional classical guitar method and the international graded examination syllabus***

Table 3 show the concept of classical guitar method in traditional classical guitar methods which are not in line with the international graded examination syllabus. The concept of the traditional classical guitar methods profiled three major questions, which are: how does classical guitar work, how does classical guitar deals with music (artistic element) and what is artistic works of classical guitar composition. meanwhile, the basic concern of the international graded examination syllabus is defined on the five competencies of music performance such as technical study, sight-reading, scale and arpeggio, 3 piece repertoires, and aural.

The integrated classical guitar method was designed using comprised three main materials, namely technical material, artistic element and artistic works. Technical covers the learning of fundamental instrument techniques and the relationship between instruments and fundamental music features. Artistic element of music are how the basic elements of music are represented as separately in the form of compositions, while the artistic work of music is an amalgamation of the basic elements of music in the form of compositions. Traditional Malaysian songs can be applied in the form of artistic elements and artistic works of music.

Three main components were selected in developing the integrated classical guitar method. First, the fundamental technique which covers the learning of fundamental instrument techniques and the relationship between instruments and fundamental music features. Second, positions and key signatures, which describe how the basic elements of music. Third, the artistic work of music is an amalgamation of the basic elements of music in the form of compositions. Malaysian traditional songs can be apply in the form of artistic elements and artistic works of music. The following are the content of the integrated approach of classical guitar method develop based on international graded examination syllabus.

Figure 3 shows the design of the integrated approach for classical guitar method



***Figure 3 the design of the integrated approach of classical guitar method***

Contents of the integrated classical guitar method was organized as follows:

**1. Fundamental techniques**

- 1) Guitar anatomy
- 2) Posture
- 3) Right hand technique
- 4) Music Symbol
- 5) Right hand technique and music symbol
- 6) Sight reading
- 7) Andantino and allegretto
- 8) Sepiring dua piring

**2. Position and key signature**

- 1) C Major scale
- 2) Chord strumming on C major
- 3) Waltz caruli
- 4) Andantino caruli
- 5) Etude No.1 F sor
- 6) G Major scale
- 7) Prelude Carcassi
- 8) Interval Herry djahwasi
- 9) Chord strumming on G major
- 10) Oleh-oleh Bandung
- 11) Vals Aguado
- 12) Andantino Carcassi
- 13) A Minor scale
- 14) Studio in A minor Aquado
- 15) Andante in A minor Carcassi
- 16) Scale in E mior
- 17) Jong-jong Inai
- 18) Romance de Amor
- 19) Romance J.K.Mertz
- 20) Scale in D major
- 21) Ayan Dikdik
- 22) Prelude
- 23) Paredetas G.Sanz
- 24) Scale In A Major
- 25) Prelude Carcassi
- 26) Waltz Carcassi
- 27) Allegretto Carcassi

**3. International graded examination syllabus**

- 1) ABRSM and Trinity Exam Pieces grade 1-3

2) Scale and arpeggio specimen for grade 1-3

### Conclusions

1. The integrated approach for classical guitar method can be used as learning material in formal education institutions and private music schools.
2. Using local content as part of learning materials can contribute in the effort of preservation and dissemination of Malaysian traditional songs.
3. The integrated approach for classical guitar method can be used as reference for students and researchers interested in related fields
4. This integrated classical guitar method can be commercialized in the form of method book and tutorial video

This research is expected to have a contribution in teaching and learning classical guitar to be more effective and efficient.

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