

# GIFT OF FIRE

## Holistic Lesson Plan



Gift of Fire is a Level 5 piece intended to help students begin to master the technique of ascending slurs. Slurs can be a really tricky skill to develop on the guitar for a number of reasons. It can be difficult to execute ascending slurs so that the second pitch in the figure “speaks” and we hear the second note clearly. It can also be challenging to coordinate the new feeling of performing a note on the guitar without using a right-hand finger to pluck the string. For these reasons, it’s important to take it slow and introduce this technique with intention and care for every student.

It is important that all students in the ensemble have confidently completed Level 4 of Guitar Curriculum before starting Gift of Fire. Each part requires reading in first position on treble and bass strings. Guitar 1 will need to be comfortable pivoting up to the fifth-fret A on the first string with the fourth finger, as well as playing four-note chords rolled with the thumb, using the 'dedillo' or brushed chord tremolo technique.

### Artistry

- Perform Gift of Fire with intense, driving character punctuated by moments of tenderness.
- Perform the bass melody beginning in measure 4 and in its return with earth-shaking gravitas.
- Through execution of clear ascending slurs, create balance between parts so that slurs can be heard.
- Perform Gift of Fire imagining that certain musical ideas are parts of a fire: the heavy wood, the glowing orange embers, the blue and yellow flames reaching for the sky, or the sparks popping to the ground.

### Technique

- Retain proper left-hand position throughout.
- Execute ascending slurs “hammering” straight down to the fret with the tip of the left-hand finger being careful not to squeeze or hold tension and ensuring that the second note of the slur sounds almost as loudly as the first.
- Execute beautiful rolled four-note chords and dedillo for parts 1 and 2.
- Perform all dynamic and tempo changes.

### Literacy

- There are no specific literacy goals for this piece. However, reading and coordinating the left hand for ascending slurs can be tricky at first. So take it slow.

### **Recommended Broad Sequence:**

- 1) Set up in proper playing position and establish P (string 4), I (string 3), M (string 2).
- 2) Ensure that the left-hand is in good position with palm parallel to the neck, thumb straight up and down behind the second fret, and fingers arched to the tip.
- 3) All parts play open 4<sup>th</sup> string with thumb. Without rearticulating with the thumb, practice placing the tip of 2<sup>nd</sup> finger on the second fret E as close to the fret in front as possible. Practice this slowly at first to ensure proper placement. Then build speed “hammering” down until you hear a clear D-E ascending slur in time.
- 4) Repeat the same sequence above but on strings 5 (with p), 3 (with p), 2 (with i), and 1 (with m). At this point, all students will be playing 0-2 ascending slurs on strings 5 through 1. See technical sequence for each step.
- 5) Once students are confident with 0-2 ascending slurs, practice 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> fret slurs using left hand fingers 2 and 3 on strings 2 (C#-D) and 1 (F#-G).
- 6) Once all open slurs and 2-3 slurs have been isolated and established, begin working in the score for Gift of Fire. Have students identify all slurs in their part. Take time to rehearse each part in isolation assuring that the slurs are rhythmically even and the second note is speaking.
- 7) There are many moments where part 1 and 2 trade off ascending slur lines. For example, in measures 24-27. Listen to these measures making sure that the parts sound the same, with good tone and clear slurs.
- 8) Feel free to add pizzicato, tasto, or ponticello where you feel it would be appropriate.
- 9) Ensure that the dedillo chord tremolo is speaking and you can hear all of the pitches in the chords.

### **Opportunities for Social Emotional Learning**

Gift of Fire was written with the idea that the feeling of anger can be a positive thing. Often, we are told that being angry is not OK, that it's an ugly emotion and we should not allow ourselves to feel it. And while sometimes it's true that anger can evolve into something mean and ugly, it's also something we need feel at times. By letting it out in appropriate ways, we may avoid the outcomes of anger that hurt others. Anger can be energizing and motivating.

It can help us stand up for what's right and advocate for ourselves and others. Lead a discussion in your class about how anger can be a positive force in our lives. What good can come of anger?



# GIFT OF FIRE

Travis Marcum

Score

♩ = 120

Guitar 1  
Level 5

Guitar 2  
Level 5

Guitar 3  
Level 5

optional pizz.

*p*

*f*



G1

G2

G3

*f*



17

G1

G2

G3

*f*

*p*

*f*

*p*

25

G1

G2

G3

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

*f*

33

G1

G2

G3

*mp*

*pp*

*p*

41

G1

G2

G3

*p*

49

G1

G2

G3

*dolce*

*rit.*

*dedillo*

*dedillo*

*dolce*

*dolce*

*3*

57

G1

G2

G3

*p*

*f*

65

G1

G2

G3

*f*

73

G1

*mp*

G2

*pp*

G3

*p*

81

G1

G2

G3

*p*

*p*

*p*

89

G1

G2

G3

97

dedillo

rit.

G1

G2

G3