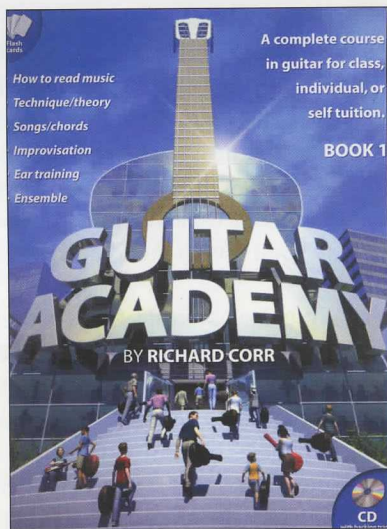


Product: *Guitar Academy* by Richard Corr
(978-0-9552749-0-9)
What: Guitar tutor
Price: £10.99
From: Academy Music Publications
Contact: www.guitaracademy.co.uk, music shops or
tel. 020 7527 0148

Whenever people ask me if I can help them learn to play the guitar I always try to find out what that means to them. For some it is a desire to play intricate classical pieces; for some it means being able to sit with a group of friends and accompany as they sing through the entire Beatles repertoire; and for others it is the dream of being able to plug in and effortlessly perform solos from Layla and The Sultans of Swing. All of these skills are equally valid, but very different, disciplines and I have seen many people frustrated by tutor books that are not really taking them towards their individual aims.

Richard Corr claims to have produced a holistic approach to guitar instruction and it is a claim he can make with justification. He tackles rudimentary music theory to enable playing from a score, explores the discipline of improvisation and composition, and also includes work on song accompaniment. Throughout the book there are helpful tips on improving the quality of your sound and easy-to-follow diagrams showing hand and finger positioning.

The book comes with a comprehensive CD covering everything from the basics of tuning to more advanced techniques such as embellishing your playing with different expressive styles. I was particularly impressed with the CD, which is careful to have the different styles of playing performed authentically.



This is also a book that can be used in a variety of ways. It will certainly help people learning on their own to develop a sound basis of good practice, but also will be invaluable as a resource for teachers with small groups of students. There are exercises, homework activities and flash cards that cover not just guitar instruction and music theory, but the wider scope of musicality and musicianship.

If I have a criticism of the book, and it is a very minor one, I would have liked a few more imaginative songs in the song accompaniment section. *Kumbaya*, *He's Got The Whole World In His Hands* and *Frère Jacques* are a little conservative for my taste, and though these are balanced a little by the inclusion songs such as *The House Of The Rising Sun*, there could perhaps have been some more inspired choices. Choice of songs of course is an entirely personal matter and you can never please everyone. Whatever the repertoire, success in learning any instrument comes down in the end to the degree to which the student is self-motivated to learn and practise, and for the student who is motivated to learn, this choice of songs will not be a hindrance – I remember being delighted to play *Bobby Shattoe* when I began learning at a time when my preferred choice of music was Slade and Mott The Hoople!

To sum up, this is an excellent guitar tutor. For the individual learner it will help with a variety of different styles of playing, and for the teacher it contains ideas and resources to develop both technical ability and musicianship. Whatever the price, this will be worth the money because it is not going to sit on the shelf – it is going to be used again and again.

Dave Thorpe

Product: *Chopin Ballades* (Jim Samson, Ed)
What: from new *Urtext The Complete Chopin: A New Critical Edition for piano*
Price: £8.95
From: Edition Peters
Contact: www.edition-peters.com

This volume has been published recently as part of the ongoing critical edition of Chopin's complete works.

The publishers have paid great attention to the clarity of the