

Emil Heerbrugger's *Grand Grecian Military March* in Facsimile

By Robert Ferguson

Grand Grecian Military March was composed for one or two guitars by German immigrant Emil Heerbrugger and published in the 1830s. The score contains no copyright notice, but the address included with the publisher's imprint, shown directly beneath the tuning gloss (of which I will say more below), allows at least the decade of the work's appearance to be determined with accuracy. According to Dichter and Shapiro, Klemm & Brother were based at 287 Market St. in Philadelphia from 1831 to 1839.¹ The second page of the score bears the stamp of the copy's original retail seller, "J.D. Sheppard, Pianoforte & Music Saloon, Buffalo."²

Emil Heerbrugger (or Heerbruger), like Frederick A. and John G. Klemm, belonged to the wave of German immigrants that entered the United States en masse in the first half of the nineteenth century, and out of whose ranks came, in Joseph Horowitz's words, "the founders of American classical music."³ But because the line between popular and classical music was less rigidly drawn on this side of the Atlantic than in Europe, many of these musicians moved easily between both spheres. Heerbrugger was one of them.

Heerbrugger played violin primarily but also guitar and cornet. From Hanover, Germany, he traveled to America with the Italian Opera Company, first landing in New York. From there he made his way south and west. Heerbrugger taught music in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, as well as Franklin, Tennessee, before settling in Nashville in 1837. During his time in Nashville, he continued teaching and performing, and in addition operated "Emil Heerbruger's Music and Fancy Store." He also spearheaded the formation of Nashville's Musical Fund Society, established late in 1837. The Society's first concert, a benefit for Heerbrugger, was presented on December 26 of that year. The organization continued to sponsor concerts in Nashville once a month through 1839, presenting music of Bellini, Weber, Meyerbeer, and Rossini, among others.⁴

In 1840 Heerbrugger showed up in Texas, playing in Austin and Houston, and advertising himself as "one of the best musicians in this country or the United States." (Texas was still an independent republic at that time.) His concert of April 22, 1840, at the Capital building in Houston was one of the first performances of its kind in Texas history, and the first in Texas for which a written program survives. A number of players participated, as was standard for that day, and its all-instrumental set list featured music by Rossini,

Auber, and Mozart on two violins and piano; pieces for French horn; solo piano; solo violin; and in one case, a "Solo—Guitar," no doubt played by Heerbrugger himself.⁵

Grand Grecian Military March is parlor music for the amateur. It displays the traits of so much of that repertoire—foursquare phrasing, strict diatonicism, tonic-dominant harmony (avoiding even the subdominant for lack of an open A-string root in Guitar 1), and simple rhythm. The tambour technique was a staple of nineteenth-century martial music on guitar, typically used to evoke drums, and Heerbrugger marks it as such in his score. The composer recommends executing the effect percussively with the right-hand middle finger.

One feature of this piece that gives it some distinction is its open E-major tuning (E-B-e-g \sharp -b-e'), described in the scordatura gloss above the first staff of Guitar 1. This tuning increases the instrument's volume and sustain, and allows for a profusion of multi-string harmonics. Curiously, Heerbrugger instructs the player to execute these harmonics by bringing the left hand around to the bass side of the fretboard and approaching the strings from that direction, with the back of the hand facing upward. Perhaps he used this mannerism in his concerts as a conceit akin to the technical antics of contemporaneous virtuoso showmen on piano and violin. Though strictly conjectural, it might also suggest that Heerbrugger placed the guitar flat on his lap to perform the harmonics section, or the whole piece.⁶ If true, this would predate by at least a half century the playing method of "lap steel" guitarists.

Heerbrugger instructs the player to finger all notes in the first guitar part as if in standard tuning. (Note that the G \sharp in m. 7 should have been placed on the first chord, where it would have affected both harmonies, producing an actual pitch of A \sharp in both.) Guitar 2 is already in standard tuning. One final point: Though it may be tempting to associate Heerbrugger's use of *Grecian* in his title with the Greek Revivalism that was so much in vogue in his day and earlier, the word more likely signals the composer's predilection for nationalistic color (whether achieved or not), conveyed in other pieces of his, like *Hungarian Waltz*, *Cicilian Waltz*, and *Swiss Air*.

Robert Ferguson is editor-in-chief of Soundboard quarterly and has long had a scholarly interest in the guitar in America.

¹ Harry Dichter and Elliott Shapiro, *Handbook of Early American Sheet Music, 1768–1889* (New York: Dover, 1977), 211. For more on the Klemm brothers, see Martha Novak Clinkscale, *Makers of the Piano, 1700–1820* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1993), 214.

² Sheppard's store was a fixture in the musical life of Buffalo from the early 1830s until the mid 1860s. Buffalo city directories, 1832–1875.

³ *Classical Music in America* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005), 397.

⁴ Tim Sharp, *Nashville Music before Country* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia, 2008), 60–63.

⁵ Gary Hartman, *The History of Texas Music* (College Station: Texas A&M Univ. Press, 2008), 103; Clayton, Lawrence and Joe W. Specht, *The Roots of Texas Music* (College Station: Texas A&M Univ. Press, 2003), 121.

⁶ I thank Thomas Heck for pointing out this last possibility to me.

GRAND GRECIAN MILITARY MARCH

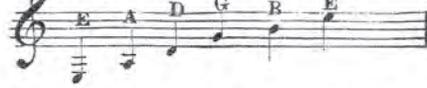
Arranged for One or Two Guitars

BY

EMIL HEERBRUGGER

Guitar Secondo ad lib:

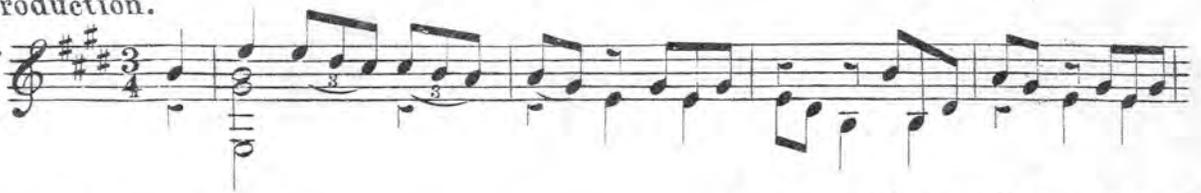
Tune the Second Guitar in the common Key



Philadelphia Klemm & Brother 287 Market St.

Introduction.

Moderato.



Property of the Publishers.

GRAND GRECIAN MILITARY MARCH

Arranged for One or Two Guitars

BY

EMIL HEERBRUGGER

Guitar Solo or Primo

Tune the First Guitar in E Chord, viz:



Philadelphia Klemm & Brother 287 Market St.

Take the Notes at their common Places as they are marked.

Introduction. *Moderato.* 3 3 1

Tempo di marcia. 1mo. 2do. *

Drums. *

12th. Position or Fret. Flageolet or Harmonic

7P 5P 7P 5P 7P 12P 7P 5P 7P 5P 7P

7P 5P 7P 12P loco 12P 7P 5P 7P 12P

N.B. Strike the Chords marked thus *, with the middle finger of the right hand as an imitation of a Drum.

Flageolet Notes: Turn the left hand over and place the Thumb below and the other fingers above the Finger Board, and touch the strings very lightly with the First finger, and strike them with the Thumb of the right Hand between the Sounding-hole and Bridge.