

12th Fret EZ Guitar Trio Series

For years, I have been in search for a capo that will clamp at the 12th fret. I even spent time experimenting with different hardware trying to create one myself. Then I found the “Spider Capo” which will fit any guitar and capo at the 12th fret. You can find it and read the history of this capo at: www.spidercapo.com.

As a classroom guitar teacher, there are times and situations when it pays for your ensemble to sound well rehearsed and polished. Examples are special events hosted by an administrator, a school district ensemble festival, and/or solo & ensemble festival, etc. Not every teaching situation supports a high level performing group. For example, many guitar programs only offer beginning and intermediate guitar. Some programs only offer one or two classes of guitar that students may repeat. Consequently, these types of classes have a mixed level of student skills.

The 12th Fret EZ Guitar Trio Series is three volumes of ensemble arrangements that are relatively easy to play and can make your guitar ensemble sound much more mature and far more advanced than they really are. This music is designed for a second semester beginning guitar class and/or a second year intermediate guitar class. These arrangements will make these young groups sound as if they are your advanced class.

Putting the Pieces Together

So what does a 12th fret capo have to do with *The 12th Fret EZ Guitar Trio Series*?

This series is entitled *The 12th Fret EZ Guitar Trio Series* because Part 1 must have a capo at the 12th fret or be played on a guitar that can be tuned one octave higher than standard tuning. If using a capo at the 12th fret, it is best to use a guitar with a cutaway. Part 1 will be played on a cutaway guitar with a capo at the 12th fret or, ideally on a half size guitar with requinto strings tuned an octave higher than standard tuning. Part 2 can be played on a regular guitar with a regular capo on the fifth fret. Or, ideally, can be played on a 3/4 size guitar also known as a requinto guitar tuned to A, E, C, G, D, A. It too will need requinto strings. Part 3 can be played on a standard size guitar using standard tuning.

To perform these trios, students will need to be able to read all of the notes in first position on all six strings. All arrangements are in the key of C Major or A minor with no sharps or flats in the key signature in parts 1 & 3. Part 2 is written with one sharp. Rhythms are mostly quarter notes, half notes, and eighth notes.

Why go to all of the trouble and expense for these new instruments and/or capos?

All of the arrangements in the **12th Fret Series** are also available in traditional format written for regular guitars. Most guitar students will not have the skill level to play these arrangements until the third year of study. Many school guitar programs do not offer a third year of guitar. The **12th Fret Series** arrangements make it possible for second year students to sound more advanced and play music that is typically reserved for advanced students.

Make your intermediate guitar class sound like an advanced class instantly.

The **12th Fret Series** arrangements can make a first quarter intermediate class sound like an advanced class almost instantly. These arrangements have a three and a half octave range which is typically reserved for advanced playing. With the use of different sized guitars or capos and these arrangements, an intermediate class can sound like an advanced class without ever playing outside of first position.

Add tembre and brightness to your guitar ensemble similar to a string orchestra.

String orchestras consists of a violin, viola, cello and bass. By using capos or different size guitars, the guitar ensemble will have more distinction between parts similar to a string orchestra. The half size guitar or 12th fret capo will give Part 1 a different tembre and brightness and will play the role of the violin. The 3/4 size guitar or 5th fret capo will make Part 2 more like the viola in the orchestra. And the regular size guitar, playing Part 3 will play the role of the cello.

First position playing never sounded so good!

Typically, when the guitar class is playing in first position, the highest note is G on the first string, third fret with an occasional A on the fifth fret. By using the capos or various size guitars, the first position class, while still playing in first position, now has an extended range of a full octave higher. The overall sound is enriched with the higher octave. Typically, extending the playing range by an octave requires a minimum of one or more additional years of study once the first position has been learned. This approach expedites the outcome.