

Douglas Niedt's GUITAR TECHNIQUE TIP OF THE MONTH

Yes, it's "Doug's Dirty Little Secrets"



I subtitled my Tech Tip "Doug's Dirty Little Secrets" after reading someone's posted message on a guitar web forum. The writer asserted that professional virtuoso guitarists all had secrets they kept to themselves and wouldn't tell anyone else, so no one would play as well as them!



SIGN UP FOR THE GUITAR TECHNIQUE TIP OF THE MONTH

The "Guitar Technique Tip of the Month" is available in newsletter form, which can be emailed to you every month. FREE, no muss no fuss. No more checking to see if the new tip is out each month. VERY convenient. [Sign Up For Douglas Niedt's Guitar Technique Tip of the Month](#)



[BE SURE TO VISIT DOUG'S "SECRET VAULT"](#)

of Dirty Little Secrets.

It contains ALL of Doug's Previous
Guitar Technique Tips of the Month

Cascading Harmonics for Classical Guitarists

The technique of cascading harmonics (or harp harmonics) is a very unique harmonic technique seldom heard in classical guitar playing. Steel-string players use them more frequently. Cascading harmonics have been used very effectively by guitarists such as Chet Atkins, Lenny Breau, and Tommy Emmanuel.

[Watch Tommy.](#)

Tommy Emmanuel describes cascading harmonics as a “waterfalling sound”—the notes trickle down in a stream of sound. In its basic form, it is a sequence (usually fast) of a right-hand harmonic plucked by the thumb followed by a non-harmonic note plucked with the “a” finger. They are most effective when the left hand holds some form of a lush 9th, 13th, diminished, or augmented chord. The basic right-hand sequence may be extended with slurs (hammer-ons and pull-offs), artificial harmonics, and other techniques, all of which I will describe and demonstrate for you in this tech tip.

[You are on DouglasNiedt.com](#)

[Watch this overview of the basic sequence on an E dominant 9th chord:](#) (Video clip #1)

Example #1 shows the right-hand pattern on open strings:

Example #1

The basic right-hand pattern

The musical notation for Example #1 consists of two staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a 6/8 time signature. It shows a sequence of notes: G4 (p), A4 (a), B4 (p), C5 (a), D5 (p), E5 (a), F5 (p), G5 (a), F5 (p), E5 (a), D5 (p), C5 (a), B4 (p), A4 (a), G4 (p). The bottom staff is a guitar tablature with strings labeled T, A, B. It shows open strings for all strings.

[Watch the video of this basic pattern.](#) (Video #2)

Here in example #2 is the chord I was holding in the overview and the right-hand artificial harmonics I played:

Example #2

While holding this E dominant 9th chord:

As the "i" finger lightly touches the indicated string at the designated fret, the thumb plucks the string. This produces an artificial harmonic:

The diagram shows a guitar neck with a treble clef staff above and a bass clef staff below. The treble staff shows an E dominant 9th chord (E-G#-A-B-C#-D) with fingerings 4, 3, 2, 1, #, 0. The bass staff shows frets 7, 7, 7, 6. The artificial harmonics are indicated by diamond-shaped boxes with numbers 19, 19, 18, 19, 18, 19, 19 on the strings.

These are the pitches that come out of the guitar as the artificial harmonics are played:

The diagram shows a guitar neck with a treble clef staff above and a bass clef staff below. The treble staff shows the pitches of the artificial harmonics: 19th fret (G#), 19th fret (A), 18th fret (B), 19th fret (C#), 18th fret (D), 19th fret (E), 19th fret (F#). The bass staff shows frets 0, 0, 4, 10, 4, 0, 0. The artificial harmonics are indicated by diamond-shaped boxes with numbers 19, 19, 18, 19, 18, 19, 19 on the strings.

Diamond-enclosed number shows where to play harmonic.
Plain number shows pitch that comes out of the guitar.

[Watch my video #3.](#)

Next, the non-harmonic notes are inserted between each harmonic note:

Example #3

While still holding the E dominant 9th chord with the left hand and plucking the artificial harmonics with the thumb, the non-harmonic notes are inserted, plucked by the "a" finger:

E Dominant 9th Chord:

The notation shows a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first measure shows the E dominant 9th chord (E, G#, A, B, C#, D) with a capo at the 8th fret. The following seven measures show a sequence of notes: G# (19th fret), A (19th fret), B (18th fret), C# (19th fret), D (19th fret), E (19th fret), and G# (19th fret). Each note is plucked with the thumb (p) and has an artificial harmonic (a) indicated above it. The bass clef shows the fretting for each note: 19, 19, 18, 19, 19, 19, 19.

These are the actual pitches heard while holding the E dominant 9th chord and playing the strings indicated in the example above:

The notation shows a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first measure shows the E dominant 9th chord (E, G#, A, B, C#, D) with a capo at the 8th fret. The following seven measures show a sequence of notes: G# (19th fret), A (19th fret), B (18th fret), C# (19th fret), D (18th fret), E (19th fret), and G# (19th fret). Each note is plucked with the thumb (p) and has an artificial harmonic (a) indicated above it. The bass clef shows the fretting for each note: 19, 19, 18, 19, 18, 19, 19. Diamond-enclosed numbers (19, 18, 19) indicate where to play harmonic. Plain numbers (3, 2, 1, 1, 2, 3, 4) indicate the pitch that comes out of the guitar.

Diamond-enclosed number shows where to play harmonic.
Plain number shows pitch that comes out of the guitar.

[You are on DouglasNiedt.com](http://DouglasNiedt.com)

[Watch me demonstrate](#) in video clip #4.

Cascading harmonics are very difficult to execute well. Tommy Emmanuel, a master of the technique, says "it takes years to get this sounding right, i.e., with the right balance between open note and harmonic".

Unfortunately, they are far more difficult to execute on the classical guitar with its high action than on a steel string guitar with its low action. And, the harmonics don't ring as clearly when plucked with the thumbnail on nylon strings as they do when plucked with a thumbpick on steel strings.

So, we classical guitarists have our work cut out for us. Let's get started.

WARNING: Do not proceed with this technique if you have not watched my previous video tech tips on natural harmonics and right-hand harmonics. It is essential that you know and have mastered the detailed information in those videos before attempting cascading harmonics. I am assuming you have all that information under your fingers. In this article, I will mention very little of the underlying techniques required to play these cascading harmonics.

Mastering the Right Hand Alone

I recommend learning to play cascading harmonics at the 19th fret. Many books and videos demonstrate them at the 12th fret. For the classical guitarist, practicing at the 12th fret tends to produce right shoulder and arm tension. Practicing at the 19th fret lessens the tendency to tense the right shoulder and keeps the right arm in a fairly normal position.

This is important because you will need to practice endless repetitions of these exercises over a period of months. You do not want to practice and develop a habit of tensing up when you play these harmonics. Plus, you will be able to practice the exercises in a single practice session for a longer period of time with no discomfort if you practice them at the 19th fret.

[Watch video clip #5 on practicing at the 19th fret.](#)

[You are on DouglasNiedt.com](http://DouglasNiedt.com)

The Ascending Cascade

In the following video, I demonstrate how to put together the ascending section of a harmonic cascade. I also repeat the importance of practicing your beginning exercises at the 19th fret.

[Watch the video first to get an idea of what you are trying to accomplish.](#) Video Clip #6.

Now, follow the detailed instructions that follow.

We begin by practicing with just the right-hand thumb plucking the 6th string harmonic at the 19th fret followed by the “a” finger playing the open third string (Example #4):

Example #4

Musical notation for Example #4. The notation consists of a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 8/8. The first staff shows a sequence of eight notes: a plucked note on the 6th string at the 19th fret (marked with a circled 6 and '19th fret'), followed by an open 3rd string note (marked with a circled 3), then a plucked note on the 6th string at the 19th fret (marked with a circled 6 and '19th fret'), followed by an open 3rd string note (marked with a circled 3), and so on. The notes are marked with dynamics: *p* (piano) for the plucked notes and *a* (accio) for the open string notes. Below the staff, there are four diamond-shaped fret markers labeled '19' on the 6th, 5th, 4th, and 3rd strings, indicating the 19th fret position.

Then, practice the right-hand thumb plucking the 5th string harmonic at the 19th fret followed by the “a” finger playing the open second string (Example #5):

Example #5

Musical notation for Example #5. The notation consists of a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 8/8. The first staff shows a sequence of eight notes: a plucked note on the 5th string at the 19th fret (marked with a circled 5 and '19th fret'), followed by an open 2nd string note (marked with a circled 2), then a plucked note on the 5th string at the 19th fret (marked with a circled 5 and '19th fret'), followed by an open 2nd string note (marked with a circled 2), and so on. The notes are marked with dynamics: *p* (piano) for the plucked notes and *a* (accio) for the open string notes. Below the staff, there are four diamond-shaped fret markers labeled '19' on the 5th, 4th, 3rd, and 2nd strings, indicating the 19th fret position.

Then, combine those two steps (Example #6):

Example #6

Example #6 shows a musical staff with a treble clef and a 2/4 time signature. The staff contains a sequence of eight notes: a quarter note on the 19th fret (marked *p*), an open string (marked *a*), a quarter note on the 19th fret (marked *p*), an open string (marked *a*), a quarter note on the 19th fret (marked *p*), an open string (marked *a*), a quarter note on the 19th fret (marked *p*), and an open string (marked *a*). Below the staff, four diamond-shaped fret markers labeled "19" are positioned under the 19th fret line. The bottom two strings of the guitar are shown with open circles (0) on the first four frets, indicating they are to be played open.

Next, practice the right-hand plucking the 4th string harmonic at the 19th fret followed by the "a" finger playing the open first string (Example #7):

Example #7

Example #7 shows a musical staff with a treble clef and a 2/4 time signature. The staff contains a sequence of eight notes: a quarter note on the 19th fret (marked *p*), an open string (marked *a*), a quarter note on the 19th fret (marked *p*), an open string (marked *a*), a quarter note on the 19th fret (marked *p*), an open string (marked *a*), a quarter note on the 19th fret (marked *p*), and an open string (marked *a*). Below the staff, four diamond-shaped fret markers labeled "19" are positioned under the 19th fret line. The bottom two strings of the guitar are shown with open circles (0) on the first four frets, indicating they are to be played open.

Then, combine those two steps (Example #8):

Example #8

Example #8 shows a sequence of notes on a guitar fretboard. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notes are: G4 (19th fret, *p*), A4 (open, *a*), B4 (19th fret, *p*), C5 (open, *a*), D5 (19th fret, *p*), E5 (open, *a*), F#5 (19th fret, *p*), and G5 (open, *a*). The bottom staff shows the fretboard with diamond-shaped markers labeled '19' at the 19th fret on the 1st, 3rd, 5th, and 7th strings. The 8th string has an '8' below it, indicating the 8th fret.

Finally, combine all the steps into a full ascending cascade (Example #9):

Example #9

The full ascending cascade

Example #9 shows a full ascending cascade on a guitar fretboard. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notes are: G4 (19th fret, *p*), A4 (open, *a*), B4 (19th fret, *p*), C5 (open, *a*), D5 (19th fret, *p*), E5 (open, *a*), F#5 (19th fret, *p*), and G5 (open, *a*). The bottom staff shows the fretboard with diamond-shaped markers labeled '19' at the 19th fret on the 1st, 3rd, 5th, and 7th strings. The 8th string has an '8' below it, indicating the 8th fret.

Do not be concerned with speed until you have mastered the clarity of the harmonics and can balance the volume between the harmonic notes and the non-harmonic notes.

When it's time to work for speed, begin again with the basic combinations illustrated above. Start each one slowly and then speed up as fast as you can without losing control.

Note in the video that a wide space is maintained between the index finger "shooting" the harmonic, and the thumb plucking the string. Also note the importance of keeping the "a" finger in position very close to the 3rd string.

One of our major goals is to match the volume of the harmonic and non-harmonic notes. The one thing most people get wrong is this: they try to play the harmonic louder to match the volume of the non-harmonic note. It should be the other way around. *Pluck the harmonic with just enough force to make it ring clearly without a percussive thud and play the non-harmonic note with the "a" finger very quietly to match the harmonic. They should sound almost exactly equal.*

The Descending Cascade

[Watch all the steps on learning the descending cascade and combining the ascending and descending into a full cascade in video clip #7.](#)

Now, follow these detailed instructions.

Begin the descent of the cascade by plucking the third string harmonic at the 19th fret with the thumb followed by the "a" finger plucking the open first string (Example #10):

Example #10

Example #10 shows a sequence of notes on a guitar. The top staff is a treble clef with a 19th fret marker. The notes are: a plucked note on the 19th fret (marked with a circled 'p'), an open second string (marked with a circled 'a'), a plucked note on the 19th fret (marked with a circled 'p'), an open second string (marked with a circled 'a'), a plucked note on the 19th fret (marked with a circled 'p'), an open second string (marked with a circled 'a'), a plucked note on the 19th fret (marked with a circled 'p'), and an open second string (marked with a circled 'a'). The bottom staff shows the 19th fret diamond marker and open string circles.

[You are on DouglasNiedt.com](http://DouglasNiedt.com)

Next, pluck the fourth string harmonic at the 19th fret with the thumb followed by the “a” finger plucking the open second string (Example #11):

Example #11

Example #11 shows a sequence of notes on a guitar. The top staff is a treble clef with a 19th fret marker. The notes are: a plucked note on the 19th fret (marked with a circled 'p'), an open second string (marked with a circled 'a'), a plucked note on the 19th fret (marked with a circled 'p'), an open second string (marked with a circled 'a'), a plucked note on the 19th fret (marked with a circled 'p'), an open second string (marked with a circled 'a'), a plucked note on the 19th fret (marked with a circled 'p'), and an open second string (marked with a circled 'a'). The bottom staff shows the 19th fret diamond marker and open string circles.

Then, combine those two steps (Example #12):

Example #12

Example #12 shows a sequence of notes on a guitar. The top staff is a treble clef with a 19th fret marker. The notes are: a plucked note on the 19th fret (marked with a circled 'p'), an open second string (marked with a circled 'a'), a plucked note on the 19th fret (marked with a circled 'p'), an open second string (marked with a circled 'a'), a plucked note on the 19th fret (marked with a circled 'p'), an open second string (marked with a circled 'a'), a plucked note on the 19th fret (marked with a circled 'p'), and an open second string (marked with a circled 'a'). The bottom staff shows the 19th fret diamond marker and open string circles.

[You are on DouglasNiedt.com](http://DouglasNiedt.com)

Move onto the next combination. Pluck the fifth string harmonic at the 19th fret with the thumb followed by the “a” finger plucking the open third string (Example #13):

Example #13

The image displays musical notation for Example #13, consisting of two staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It contains a sequence of eight notes: a half note on the fifth line (G4) marked with a circled '5' and '19th fret' below it, followed by a quarter rest, then a half note on the second line (D4) marked with a '0' below it. This pattern repeats four times, with the notes marked with *p* (piano) and *a* (animo) above them. The bottom staff is a guitar staff with six lines. It shows four diamond-shaped fret markers labeled '19' on the fifth, third, second, and first strings. The strings are marked with '0' to indicate they are open.

Now, combine those two steps (Example #14):

Example #14

Musical notation for Example #14. The top staff shows a sequence of notes on the sixth string (treble clef, 8th octave): a plucked note at the 19th fret (marked *p*), an open string (marked *a*), a plucked note at the 19th fret (marked *p*), an open string (marked *a*), a plucked note at the 19th fret (marked *p*), an open string (marked *a*), a plucked note at the 19th fret (marked *p*), and an open string (marked *a*). The bottom staff shows the corresponding fretboard diagram with diamond markers at the 19th fret and open circles on the strings.

The final combination is to pluck the sixth string harmonic at the 19th fret with the thumb followed by the “a” finger plucking the open fourth string (Example #15):

Example #15

Musical notation for Example #15. The top staff shows a sequence of notes on the sixth string (treble clef, 8th octave): a plucked note at the 19th fret (marked *p*), an open string (marked *a*), a plucked note at the 19th fret (marked *p*), an open string (marked *a*), a plucked note at the 19th fret (marked *p*), an open string (marked *a*), a plucked note at the 19th fret (marked *p*), and an open string (marked *a*). The bottom staff shows the corresponding fretboard diagram with diamond markers at the 19th fret and open circles on the strings.

[You are on DouglasNiedt.com](http://DouglasNiedt.com)

You may notice that the “a” finger plucking the open fourth string makes a scratchy sound. That is the fingernail scraping across the windings of the string. You won’t be able to eliminate the noise entirely. Thankfully, when the full cascade is played, the scraping sound is less noticeable.

Now, combine this combination with the previous one (Example #16):

Example #16

Example #16 shows a descending cascade of notes on a treble clef staff. The notes are: 19th fret (p), 18th fret (a), 17th fret (p), 16th fret (a), 15th fret (p), 14th fret (a), 13th fret (p), and 12th fret (a). The notes are marked with *p* (piano) and *a* (accents). Below the staff is a guitar fretboard diagram with fret markers at 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19. The notes are indicated by circles on the strings, with a diamond-shaped marker at the 19th fret.

Now, you can practice the entire descending cascade (Example #17):

Example #17

The full descending cascade

Example #17 shows the full descending cascade of notes on a treble clef staff. The notes are: 19th fret (p), 18th fret (a), 17th fret (p), 16th fret (a), 15th fret (p), 14th fret (a), 13th fret (p), 12th fret (a), 11th fret (p), 10th fret (a), 9th fret (p), 8th fret (a), 7th fret (p), 6th fret (a), 5th fret (p), 4th fret (a), 3rd fret (p), 2nd fret (a), and 1st fret (p). The notes are marked with *p* (piano) and *a* (accents). Below the staff is a guitar fretboard diagram with fret markers from 1 to 19. The notes are indicated by circles on the strings, with a diamond-shaped marker at the 19th fret.

Next, combine the ascending and descending cascades into a complete cascade (Example #18):

Example #18

The complete harmonic cascade

The image shows a musical score for a guitar. The top staff is in treble clef and contains seven measures of music. Each measure starts with a circled number (8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2) and a circled '19th fret' label. The notes are: G4 (circled 8), A4 (circled 7), B4 (circled 6), C5 (circled 5), D5 (circled 4), E5 (circled 3), and F5 (circled 2). Each note is followed by a whole rest. Above each note is a slur containing a 'p' (piano) and an 'a' (accendo). The bottom staff shows a diagram of the guitar fretboard with diamond-shaped markers labeled '19' on the 19th fret of each string, and a '0' on the open string of each string.

[You are on DouglasNiedt.com](http://DouglasNiedt.com)

Adding the Left hand

In the next video clip, I demonstrate the step of stringing several cascades together.

Then, I introduce using the left hand to hold chords while executing the basic harmonic cascade pattern. The chords I use in this video clip are (Example #19):

Example #19

Same chord as preceding but
with more comfortable fingering

The image shows a musical staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains four chords, each with a different fingering indicated by numbers 1-4. Below the staff are six horizontal lines representing guitar strings, with fret numbers written below them: 7, 7, 7, 7, 6, 5.

[Watch the video demonstration in Video Clip #8.](#)

Adapting the right hand technique to the chord held by the left hand. How to practice.

In the next video clip, I demonstrate how the right-hand pattern changes according to what chord you hold with the left hand. I also show in detail how to practice these changes.

[You are on DouglasNiedt.com](http://DouglasNiedt.com)

Here are the chords I'm using (Example #20):

Example #20

The image shows musical notation for Example #20. It consists of two staves. The top staff is a treble clef staff with a '8' below it, indicating an octave. It contains four chords, each with a treble clef and a '3' above it. The chords are: 1) F#m (1-2-3-4), 2) F#m (1-2-3-4), 3) F#m (2-3-4), and 4) F#m (2-3-4). The bottom staff is a bass staff with four chords, each with a '7' above it. The chords are: 1) 7-7-6-6, 2) 7-7-6-5, 3) 7-7-8-6, and 4) 7-7-8-5.

[Watch how to do this in Video Clip #9.](#)

Extensions of the Cascade

Sometimes you may want to extend the duration of a cascade. This can be done in several ways.

[Watch this video as I demonstrate the first two methods of extending a cascade: the three-note roll and the addition of artificial harmonics at the end.](#)

Three-note roll

This is the notation for a three-note roll of the bass string. This is added before the first harmonic is plucked (Example #21):

[You are on DouglasNiedt.com](http://DouglasNiedt.com)

Example #21

While holding this E dominant 9th chord:

3-note roll extension

p *a* *p* *a* *p* *a* *p* *a* *p* *a*

19th fret 19th fret 18th fret 19th fret 18th fret 19th fret 18th fret 19th fret

7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 6

0 0 6 7 7 7 7 7 7 6

Adding Artificial Harmonics at the end

[Here is another video view of this technique.](#)

This is the notation for an extension of three artificial harmonics. This is added at the end of the ascent of a harmonic cascade (Example #22):

Example #22

While holding this E dominant 9th chord:

3-note artificial harmonic extension

Repetition of note pairs

A cascade can be easily extended by repetition of note pairs within the cascade.

[Watch me demonstrate this very effective technique in Video Clip #12.](#)

One of the most common examples of this technique repeats the 3rd string harmonic-1st string non-harmonic and 4th string harmonic-2nd string non-harmonic pairs (Example #23):

Example #23

While holding this
E dominant 9th chord:

Extension of cascade by repetition of note pairs within the cascade

Adding Slurs (hammer-ons and pull-offs)

The harmonic cascade can also be extended by the use of slurs (hammer-ons or pull-offs).

[Watch me demonstrate in Video Clip #13 how to use slurs to extend a cascade.](#)

Next, follow these detailed written examples and try them out!

In example #24, I add an ascending slur (hammer-on):

Example #24

The musical notation for Example #24 consists of a treble clef staff and a guitar fretboard diagram below it. The treble staff begins with a chord labeled "Hold this chord" in the key of D major (D4, F#4, A4, C#5). The melody starts on the 19th fret with a plucked note (p) and an ascending slur (a) over a hammer-on. The notes are: 19th fret (1), 19th fret (2), 19th fret (4), 19th fret (1), 19th fret (4), 19th fret (2), 19th fret (5), 19th fret (2), 19th fret (4), 19th fret (6). The fretboard diagram shows the 7th, 6th, and 5th strings with fret numbers 7, 9, and 19. Diamond-shaped markers with "19" indicate the 19th fret position on the 5th, 4th, and 3rd strings.

In example #25, I keep the ascending slur (hammer-on) and add a descending slur (pull-off):

Example #25

Musical notation for Example #25. The piece is in G major (one sharp) and 8/8 time. It begins with a chord labeled "Hold this chord" (G major). The main melody consists of eighth notes on the 19th fret, with fingerings 1, 3, 5, 2, 4, 1, 3, 1, 4, 1, 2, 5, 3, 6, 4, 6. The notes are marked with *p* (piano) and *a* (accents). Annotations include "Added ascending slur (hammer-on)" pointing to the 4th and 1st notes, and "Added descending slur (pull-off)" pointing to the 3rd and 1st notes. The bass line consists of a 7th fret barre with occasional 9th fret notes, indicated by diamond-shaped fret markers.

[You are on DouglasNiedt.com](http://DouglasNiedt.com)

Or, in example #26, I keep the ascending and descending slurs, plus add a second descending slur:

Example #26

Musical notation for Example #26. It follows the same key and time signature as Example #25. The melody includes ascending slurs (hammer-ons) and descending slurs (pull-offs). Annotations include "Ascending slur", "Descending slur", and "Added descending slur (pull-off)". The bass line is similar to Example #25, with a 7th fret barre and diamond-shaped fret markers.

Adding repeatable triplet note groups

A little trickier extension of a harmonic cascade can be made with triplet note groups, often repeated several times in a row. The triplet note group consists of a harmonic plucked by the thumb, then a non-harmonic note plucked by the “a” finger, followed by a descending slur (pull-off).

[Watch me do it in Video Clip #14.](#)

Here is an example of a basic repeatable triplet figure (Example #27):

Example #27

A Basic Repeatable Triplet Note Group

Hold this diminished shape chord

VI

The musical notation consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). It shows a diminished shape chord (VI) with fingerings 3, 2, 1, #1. To the right, a triplet note group is repeated four times. Each triplet starts with a plucked harmonic (p) on the 19th fret, followed by a plucked note (a) on the 19th fret, and then a descending slur (pull-off) from the 19th fret to the 18th fret. The bottom staff shows the fretting hand with a diamond-shaped marker containing '19' on the 19th fret of the 6th string, and a slur from the 7th fret to the 6th fret on the 5th string, repeated four times.

[You are on DouglasNiedt.com](http://DouglasNiedt.com)

The same idea can be applied to a second note pair in the chord (Example #28):

Example #28

Hold this diminished shape chord

A Second Repeatable Note Group

The musical notation for Example #28 consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and shows a diminished chord VI with fingerings 3, 2, 1, 1, 2, 3. To the right, a 'Second Repeatable Note Group' is shown on the 18th fret, consisting of a triplet of eighth notes: 1# (finger 4), 3# (finger 2), and 1# (finger 2). This group is repeated four times, each marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic and an accent (*a*) mark. The bottom staff shows the fretboard with the 18th fret highlighted by diamond-shaped markers labeled '18'. The fretboard has fingerings 7, 6, 7, 6 on the strings above the 18th fret and 7, 6, 7, 6 on the strings below.

These two note groups can be combined into a double repeatable triplet note group (Example #29):

Example #29

Hold this diminished shape chord

Double Repeatable Triplet Note Group

The musical notation for Example #29 consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and shows a diminished chord VI with fingerings 3, 2, 1, 1, 2, 3. To the right, a 'Double Repeatable Triplet Note Group' is shown on the 19th fret, consisting of two triplets of eighth notes: 2 (finger 3), 3 (finger 1), and 1# (finger 2). This group is repeated four times, each marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic and an accent (*a*) mark. The bottom staff shows the fretboard with the 19th fret highlighted by diamond-shaped markers labeled '19'. The fretboard has fingerings 7, 6, 7, 6 on the strings above the 19th fret and 7, 6, 7, 6 on the strings below.

[You are on DouglasNiedt.com](http://DouglasNiedt.com)

Here is an example of a cascade consisting of: the basic ascending and descending cascade, an added ascending slur, a repeated double triplet note group, and the final descent to the end (Example #30):

Example #30

Hold this diminished shape chord VI

The basic harmonic cascade pattern

Added ascending slur (hammer-on)

A double repeatable triplet note group

19th fret 19th fret 18th fret 19th fret 18th fret 19th fret 19th fret

19th fret 18th fret 19th fret 19th fret 19th fret

Conclusion

Harmonic cascades are rarely used by classical guitarists. But it is a dazzling technique. With experimentation and imagination, harmonic cascades can be used very effectively in newer repertoire, and especially arrangements of popular music for the classical guitar. Although they are more difficult to execute on a classical guitar than a steel string guitar, they are very feasible. It just takes a ton of practice! So what else is new?

You are on DouglasNiedt.com



SIGN UP FOR THE GUITAR TECHNIQUE TIP OF THE MONTH

The "Guitar Technique Tip of the Month" is available in newsletter form, which can be emailed to you every month. FREE, no muss no fuss. No more checking to see if the new tip is out each month. VERY convenient. [Sign Up For Douglas Niedt's Guitar Technique Tip of the Month](#). We promise you will NOT be sent anything else. This is just the Tech Tip.



[BE SURE TO VISIT DOUG'S "SECRET VAULT"](#)

Doug's Dirty Little Secrets.

It contains ALL of Doug's Previous
Guitar Technique Tips of the Month