Angelus Ad Virginem

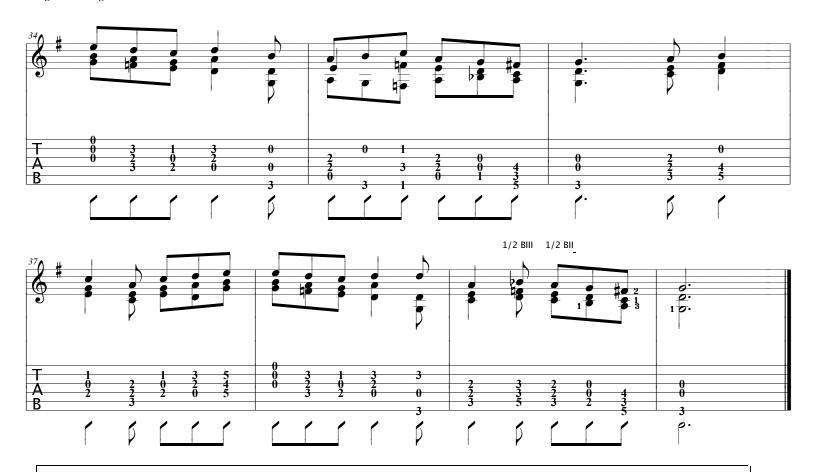
Traditional Arrangement Copyright © 2009 Accent On Music LLC and Mark D. Hanson. All Rights Reserved.

Lightly, with Movement

13th C.; Arr: Mark Hanson From: www.AccentOnMusic.com







"Angelus Ad Viginem" is a 13th-century carol with Latin text pertaining to the Annunciation. The Annunciation, celebrated by many Christian churches, is the revelation to Mary by Angel Gabriel that she is going to bear a child.

In this solo guitar arrangement, the melody is played initially as a single voice, alternating with parallel octave phrases - in this case, a texture borrowed from the octave singing of medieval monks. The reason for doing this is to maintain the listener's attention by offering a different texture on the repeat. Since a guitar solo has no text to maintain the listeners' attention, maintaining their attention becomes a matter of developing other aspects of the music - such as texture, dynamics, phrasing, harmony, and so on.

On the repeat of the melody starting in measure 23, three-part harmony ensues. The melody is in the middle voice. There is much open-fifth harmony here (no thirds in many of the chords - the note that makes chords more modern sounding), so it has a distinctive medieval sound. The juxtaposition of the F-naturals and F-sharps provides a lovely modal sound, as does the B-flat notes introduced in the harmony near the end of the piece.

This piece is not hard to play with some practice. However, here are a number of technical suggestions for you: 1) In measures 27 & 29, sustain the initial middle-voice note (the A, which is the melody) until the third pluck of the measure - the top and bottom voices change notes as the melody sustains; 2) in the last half of measure 31, mute the open G-string with the left-hand as you fret the final Bm/D chord; 3) on the second and third chords of measure 39, play a partial barre chord (through the fourth or fifth string) with the index finger. This puts your index fingertip right next to the B note on the fifth string that it needs to fret on the second-to-last chord of the measure; 4) READ the rhythm/timing markings!!! This piece is in 6/8 time, like a jig. Most quarter/eighth passages mimic the opening two measures: 1-2-3-4-5-6, with the notes picked on the counts of 1, 3, 4, and 6. However, on occasion there is a rhythm called a "Scotch snap" where the notes are played on 1 and 2, or 4 and 5, not on 3 or 6. Examples of this include the last two notes of measures 13, 18, 31 and 36; and the first two notes of measures 27 and 29.

This is a wonderful, time-honored piece. Choirs and vocal ensembles sing it every Christmas season. Now solo guitarists can play it, too. Have fun!