



# The Art of Gospel Guitar

*El McMeen*

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## **The Art of Gospel Guitar** El McMeen

Christian men and women have produced and carried forward some of the most compelling music known to mankind. It can be of breathtaking beauty, soaring into the vaulted ceiling of a grand cathedral – or plumbing the depths of one’s soul. It can be rhythmic - encouraging the body to sway, feet to tap, and hands to clap. It can be somber, evoking meditation, deep emotions, memory, and imagination. The challenge for guitarists is to capture the spirit of this music on a six-stringed instrument. This folio contains a variety of hymns and spirituals arranged for guitar in a familiar tuning, which is one step away from “Standard” guitar tuning. It’s called “Dropped D Tuning,” and simply involves lowering the pitch of the lowest string on a six-string guitar one whole step, to a D from an E. Much care has been given to the note voicings in these transcriptions. The reader is strongly encouraged to use the tablature in the first instance, with the music notation representing the overall structure of each piece, the note values, and the rhythm. The attempt is to capture in some cases the ringing, arpeggiated notes of the harper, and in others the sustain and vibrato of the violinist, or the chordal power of the organist. Guitarists who view Dropped D Tuning as simply a variant of Standard Tuning may be surprised to encounter in this music an “open-tuning” quality, and a variety of key signatures (like the key of F) not commonly used in Standard Tuning.

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