Les Feuilles Mortes
Kosma/Prévert
Arr: Marcel Dadi
from an original arrangement by Chet Atkins
Add. arr: Tom Thomason (1974)
TablEdited by Tom Thomason(1998)

Intro
T = L.H. Thumb

First section
Les Feuilles Mortes - Kosma/Prévert

Second section

Page 3 / 16
Due to its length and the number of chord positions used, this is probably the most difficult piece that I play.
as part of my standard repertoire.

Originally written by the French team of Kosma and Prévert, it’s often credited to Johnny Mercer who wrote the English lyrics and presented it under the title “Autumn Leaves”.

This arrangement is taken originally from the work of Chet Atkins by way of the French guitarist Marcel Dadi. I’ve added an introduction and a few licks here and there. One of the more interesting aspects of the arrangement is the fact that it switches keys from Am to Dm in the middle of the piece.

The introduction should be played VERY legato and romantically before going over to a more standard Travis/Atkins “swing” style. The timings and emphasis shown here are only one of the possible interpretations.

The 2nd string slide beginning at the end of measure 12 is not as distinct as the tablature would make it appear. Having sustained the D note from the second half of the second beat, it just sort of “tags along” when you go up the neck to play the F#m7 chord. The bass E note is, however, emphasized.

The upper three strings (2, 3 and 4) of the F#m7 chord should be kept in place during the entire measure with only the index finger being transferred from the 9th fret of the 5th string to the 8th fret of the 6th.

The G chord in 31 is actually played with a double barré. The notes at the 12th fret being fretted with a flattened ring finger while leaving the first string untouched. This is a technique I use quite often as it leaves the little and index fingers of the left hand free to fret incidental melody notes.

The slide in measure 34 is another one of those “tag-along” slides. The chord should be picked on arrival. The amount of emphasis is dependent on your own interpretation of the piece.

The G chord in measure 51 is another example of that flattened ring finger I mentioned earlier. This time with the pinky fretting the 13th fret of the 2nd string above the secondary barré.

In measures 56-57 the arrangement modulates into the key of Dm and stays there for the rest of the piece.

In measure 65 the bass note used for the F chord is raised from the G note of measure 57 to a G# to provide contrast. The position can be difficult at first but it’s nothing that a little practice won’t take care of.

The F note played in the second beat of measure 73 is fretted by moving your index finger from the 4th fret of the 1st string and “tucking” it under the other fingers already holding the basic chord position.

Although the slide in measure 74 is only marked on the 4th string, the 3rd string position fretted in 73 should be held until just before your arrival at the 9th fret.

The final 12 in measure 77 is fretted with the ring finger of your left hand as part of the secondary barré indicated at the beginning of 78. The little and index fingers are used to fret the 15th and 13th frets, respectively.

The timings of the long series of hammers and pull-offs appearing in measures 79 and 80 are very approximate. The tempo changes are entirely dictated by the fact that I felt that it sounded better this way. The piece is basically quite romantic in nature. Playing them a tempo just sounds “flashy” and, in my opinion, detracts from the feeling of the tune.
The chord changes in 83-85 require good control in order to bring out the descending bass line. The change I find most difficult is the one at the beginning of 84. The actual position does NOT contain the half barré indicated by the chord diagram. The "D" shape should be fretted with the middle, ring and little fingers with the index fretting the bass note.

The little B-G-A run in 111 should be played very legato to bring out the melody.

The timings in the end tag beginning in measure 117 are very approximate. Play the whole thing very freely, returning to the "soupy" romanticism of the introduction.

The slide in the next to the last measure isn’t, in fact, picked separately at all but is simply a result of running up for the final flourish.

Any questions you may have about this or any other of my tablatures can be sent to me at:

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