

Seven-String Conversions

By Troy Cummings

Interest in the Russian seven-string guitar repertoire can only go so far until you actually want to feel it under your fingers. This article is about four guitarists who could not stand it anymore and built their own seven-string classical guitars. The guitarists are Krzysztof Piotrowicz from Australia, Troy Cummings from Kansas City, Missouri, Stefan Wester from Pitea, Sweden, and Dan Caraway from Dubuque, Iowa. I hope this article helps. On each guitar there were three changes: the bridge, the fingerboard nut, and the tuning pegs.



Krzysztof Piotrowicz's guitar is a Yamaha 170SA (1980s).

1. New Bridge (The old bridge was planed off, and a new one was built and glued on.)



2. New Fingerboard Nut (This nut was made of bone.)

3. Electric Guitar Tuner (An electric guitar tuner that matched the gold color on the original tuning pegs was installed. It is for the 7th string.)



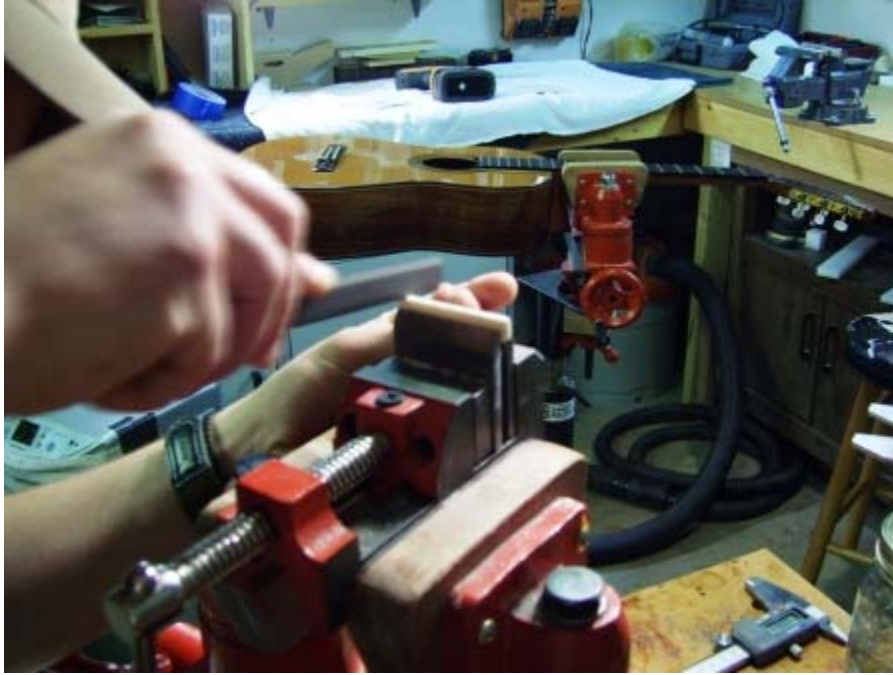


Troy Cummings' guitar is a Ramirez 2E (2000).

1. Thirteen Hole Bridge (There was enough room on the fret board for the strings to be a little wider, so seven new holes were drilled in the bridge. The outer two were just outside the original six. To drill the holes a long drill bit was used, and a flat piece of wood with guide lines on it doubled as a template for drilling and a guard against damaging the soundboard.)



2. New Fingerboard Nut (The fingerboard nut was not glued in this guitar. Therefore, a new one was made from bone and slid in place.)



3. Violin Peg (To make seven tuning pegs, a violin peg was installed in the headstock. This peg is for the 4th string.)





Stefan Wester's guitar is an Alhambra 5P (1985).

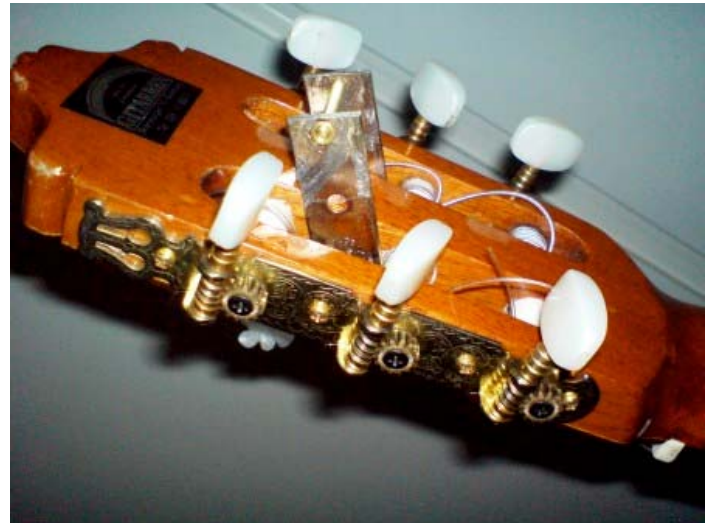
1. Five New Holes in the Bridge (The outer two holes were kept in this conversion.)



2. Five New Grooves in the Fingerboard Nut (Keeping the original outer grooves, five new grooves were cut.)



3. Classical Guitar Tuner Invention (This tuner is for the 4th string, and it is held in position by tension. Two pieces of the metal parts of classical guitar tuning pegs were cut. A length of peg was cut to match the width of the center head stock, and a tuner is connected to the length of peg. Two sets of bolts and nuts hold the mechanism at an angle that allows the string to contact the bridge nut properly.)





Dan Caraway's guitar is a Fender FC-30 (1980s).

1. Notched Bridge Saddle (Only one hole was drilled directly in the center of this bridge. To make the seven strings line up a notched bridge saddle was built. Using the original saddle as a template a line was traced on the new saddle to mark how far to saw the notches. The notches were cut with nut slotting files like those used to notch a finger board nut.)



2. Five New Grooves in the Fingerboard Nut (The original nut was glued in so the grooves were cut while the nut was still on the guitar.)



3. Banjo Tuning Peg (For the 4th string a geared banjo machine was installed in the upper headstock. Since the headstock of a banjo is thinner than that of a classical guitar a recess was drilled to make the width correct.)

