

# INTRODUCTION

In recent years juggling has enjoyed a tremendous surge of popularity. Once primarily the domain of a closed society of performers, juggling has gone public as a legitimate leisure time sport and recreational activity. The happy result is that today's professionals work for more enlightened, enthusiastic audiences.

Standards of excellence for jugglers are rising faster than ever, what with literally thousands of tossers around the globe glutting the air with props. Today nearly every juggler, amateur or pro, is compelled to play the "numbers game," that endless quest to put up "just one more" club, ring, or ball.

This book, however, invites you to take a deserved break from the strain of that "numbers game." Departing from the realm of clubs, rings, and balls, this book will show you how to apply your existing skills, dexterity, and reflexes to a range of props that have been favorites of professional jugglers for generations.

In performance, a hat, plate, or mixed-object piece can be a theatrical change of pace. Plus the appeal of juggling with everyday objects is universal. Perhaps more significant, a manipulative interlude with just one or two props affords an unhurried showcase of the performer's stage personality and character. I can attest to the entertainment value of "manipulative miscellanea" in many thousands of performances, but as always, presentation is the key. Though hat and cane manipulation, for example, may be "old style" juggling, it still works when sold with freshness, immediacy, and style for the contemporary audience.

The context of the book naturally reflects my own professional experience and areas of expertise. (Sorry ... no chapters on knife throwing or Australian bullwhip manipulation!) But rather than present an encyclopedia, I have selected the most useful and entertaining moves with the various props. Each instructional chapter contains enough material from which to develop an entire routine.

The book assumes the reader's full knowledge of toss juggling with balls, rings, and clubs, and the attendant terminology. Most of the descriptions and illustrations are from the right-handed perspective.

Adapting the skills learned from this book to your own performance style will make you a more well-rounded juggler in short order. But as a juggler you already know there are no limits save for the natural laws. So my advice is to use this book as a foundation from which to explore, practice, and create. And please don't forget to have fun as you go along.

– **Reginald W. Bacon**  
(a.k.a. “Mr. Slim”)  
Newburyport, Mass.  
March 1984