

INTRODUCTION

The Juggler's Manual of Cigar Box Manipulation & Balance is brought to you by popular demand. The very existence of such a specialized book is a direct result of the growing popularity of juggling as a hobby and leisure time activity. In the past 20 years a number of basic instructional books have opened the world of juggling to thousands of people. At this writing (1983) membership in the International Jugglers Association approaches 2,000. So, to professional and amateur jugglers of all persuasion, I invite you to enjoy the challenge of cigar box manipulation.

In conventional toss juggling, the objects travel in an arc through the air, the flowing pattern maintained by the juggler's regular rhythm. Cigar box manipulation, however, produces a hesitating, staccato tempo. If you are a beginner, no doubt you have seen a performance by a juggler holding a rectangular box in each hand and clamping a third box between. The hollow knock of the boxes as they are turned and clamped complements the visual effect. The acro-contortionist juggler is capable of turning cigar box skills into a dazzling presentation.

The information in this book will lead you from the most basic of the three-box moves to the most delicate of the 12-box balancing stunts. As a juggler, you already know that there are few shortcuts to true juggling skill. There is still no substitute for practice. This book can guide you along your way, inspire your imagination, and help you use your practice time efficiently.

For the amateur and hobbyist juggler, cigar boxes are fun. The technique of box manipulation provides a physical and mental

change of pace. For the professional, a cigar box routine at the very least is an entertaining departure from more rigorous toss juggling. At best a cigar box routine is a show stopper.

As you work through this book you will find material for both entertainment and experimentation. You will find that some moves are inherently more interesting and/or dazzling to an audience than others. (In my professional engagements, my job is to entertain, so I confess a certain bias.) Some of the more complex moves will take two minutes to read about, yet only one second to do. But all these personally-tested moves work. There is no magic here.

Though I have included as many useful and entertaining variations as possible, the book remains a manual – not an encyclopedia. As in other forms of juggling, the number of variations is limited only by your own imagination. The creative reward is in combining and choreographing the moves – and that pleasure I leave to you!

– Reginald W. Bacon
(a.k.a. “Mr. Slim”)
Groveland, Mass.
January 1983