

Introduction

Welcome to *The Juggler's Trilogy of Timeless Techniques*, which compiles in one volume all three major works in English on early 20th-century theatrical juggling artistry: *The Art of Modern Juggling* (1907) by Anglo (Thomas Horton), *Juggling Secrets* (1911) by Will Goldston, and *Juggling* (1921) by Rupert Ingalese. The digitally-restored page images are from the relatively scarce originals in the Vaudeville Retrospective Collection. All three works, now in the public domain, are introduced in their respective sections with context, commentary, and new research findings.

This book is a companion to *The Juggler's Anthology of Venerable Veracities*, a 288-page collection of books, articles, interviews, and excerpts, from 1821 to 1952, by-and-about jugglers and juggling.

This introduction (1) describes each book; (2) explains the rationale and point-of-view; (3) presents context of vaudeville and variety entertainment; (4) notes similarities, differences, and idiosyncracies among the books; (5) outlines organization; and (6) provides notes on the digital restoration and graphic production.

The three books, briefly introduced:

The Art of Modern Juggling (1907) by Anglo (Thomas Horton), with James F. Middelton (ed.), is regarded as the first book-length instructional work on juggling in English. The author, the Australian vaudeville juggler Anglo, supposedly arranged to have the book published in England in 1903, shortly before his life took an unfortunate turn. The illustrated 107-page book was published three years after his death. The commentary includes details of Anglo's ignominious end – at the end of a hangman's rope.

Juggling Secrets (1911) by Will Goldston (ed.), with Fred Velasco and Harry Carmo, was among many books authored, compiled, or published by the prolific magic promoter and dealer. For years prior to this book, Goldston included descriptions of “juggling” stunts in his magic magazines and annuals. These stunts usually involved a specially-prepared prop. This 96-page book, however, is enriched by the informed juggling content provided by Cinquevalli disciple Harry Carmo, and the crisp illustrations by Fred Velasco.

Juggling (1921) by Rupert Ingalese (Paul Wingrave) is the shortest of the three books, at 80 pages, but it best withstands the test of time. Compared to the other two authors, Ingalese drew upon considerably more on-stage juggling experience, as well as on his long commitment to the craft of juggling – and to the craft of performance. The commentary includes new discoveries about the author's globe-trotting career – and multiple performance identities.

Rationale and point-of-view. The aim of *The Juggler's Trilogy* is to aggregate in one volume the three early-20th-century book-length instructional works on juggling, now in the public domain.

Although the titles in *The Juggler's Trilogy* are available individually elsewhere, your compiler (that's *me*) believes there is value in (1) presenting the three works in one book; (2) approximating the original reading experience via the original page images; and (3) sharing my commentary informed by long and sometimes parallel careers as performing artist and museum/history professional.

As for point-of-view, in my performance career I worked far-and-wide for 35 years in nearly every kind of venue as an acrobatic juggler, comedy dancer, and jazz/ragtime musician. As a researcher, my roots are in my pre-showbusiness career as an investigative journalist and editor. During my performance career, it was the journalist's curiosity that drove the study of my on-stage specialties, as well as the study of early-20th-century American popular music, vaudeville, and circus. As part of a proactive plan to exit showbiz with all body parts still functioning, later-in-life graduate studies provided the foundation for work in the museum and history field.

But along with the so-called wisdom that one accumulates, there are also a few biases, and they are acknowledged here in advance.

For instance, with my stage background I tend to place more value on the ability of a performer to connect with an audience than on a performer's technique alone. And as an athlete and juggler, though retired from the demands of my old acro-juggling repertoire, the continued joy of accomplishment in the immediate physical world sustains aversion to stunts solely dependent on a magician's fakery.

As a researcher/historian and old-school journalist, I admit to maintaining a well-calibrated "baloney detector." Therefore in the midst of probing early-20th-century showbusiness sources, the alert may sound upon encountering excessive hyperbole or flabby press agent fiction. And as the author of a book on research methodology, I admit to advocating the discipline's best practices.

Vaudeville context. All three books in this volume were published when vaudeville (a.k.a. “variety”) was near or at its peak in England, Europe, the U.S., Australia, and South Africa. From our 21st-century perspective, with vaudeville obscured by decades of misconceptions, it is difficult to fathom how prominent it was on the cultural landscape. In the late 19th century, vaudeville grew from a simple concept: A respectable general audience variety show comprised of multiple “acts” unconnected by plot. Aided by advances in transportation and communication, entrepreneurs commanding networks of well-appointed theatres built the genre into a dominant form of leisure. Vaudeville had a homogenizing effect on popular tastes, and vestiges of its influence persist today.

A harsh reality for jugglers to understand is that in the 1880-1930 vaudeville era, even supremely talented jugglers were assigned the least desirable spots on the bill. Because most juggling acts were non-speaking “dumb acts,” they were ideal to open or close. They could carry on, working to music, while arriving or departing theatre patrons shuffled about, ignoring the artistry and clattering their seats. There were exceptions, artists whose undeniable appeal merited a spot in the middle of the bill, like Cinquevalli, W.C. Fields, Kara, Rastelli, and Bobby May, to name a few.

The books: Similarities, differences, idiosyncracies. All three books were originally published in London, England, and their authors tended to view juggling as a close cousin of refined stage “conjuring” ... rather than in the category of sweaty athleticism and circus acrobatics. It is worth noting that this was not necessarily the uniform public perception of juggling around the world.

Because the books reflect the trends of the time and place, there are plenty of hats, canes, cigars, umbrellas, plates, and bottles throughout – the foundation of the timeless “gentleman juggler” repertoire that, in the right hands, retains its appeal today. In the early 20th century, the ardent amateur could learn the basics of toss juggling from any of these books, and also pick up a few gaffed prop ideas on how to make an “impossible” stunt work. The commentary places this magic-oriented gimmickry in context.

The Art of Modern Juggling by Anglo seems imbued with the authoritative voice of a juggler with stage experience. But in what can be gleaned about the author from newspapers and court records, his shows were infrequent, and his writing skills minimal. James F. Middleton, credited as editor, is also a mystery. Perhaps a future researcher will uncover more about the genesis of this book.

In *Juggling Secrets*, Will Goldston, the magic dealer and promoter, claims only to be the editor and compiler. One wonders, while reading some of the text, if he did any juggling at all. Goldston does credit Harry Carmo, a performer who ardently embraced the style of Cinquevalli, for one 16-page chapter, while most other chapters are noted as “written and illustrated by Fred Velsaco.”

Juggling by Rupert Ingalese has the most personal content of the three books, as the author detailed in the introduction his youthful fascination with juggling and his ambitions for the stage. The inside tips in the book, hard-won through his performance career, make this book, in my view, the most authoritative of the three.

The publishers of all three books advertised an array of props and gimmicks for the prospective juggler. One might wonder if prop-sales potential was a factor when deciding to publish the books.

Organization. Each book section begins with a cover image, publication details, biographical sketch of the author, the compiler's commentary, and endnotes. This context is followed by the original page images of the entire book.

Graphic production notes. The line-by-line cleanup of the scanned page images was a true test of tolerance for tedium. Broken and faded letters were fixed. Filled-in letters were opened up. Voids in illustrations were filled. Also cleaned up were specks, flecks, smears, and schmutz – the imperfections of pages damaged by age, use, or neglect. To be faithful to the originals, any typographic or grammatical oversights were left alone. For each book, the original page images were proportionally enlarged slightly to conform to the column-width of this standard 6x9 volume.

Finally, I acknowledge that some in our worldwide community of juggling enthusiasts might contemplate this volume thusly: “Books about juggling? Is that an oxymoronic phrase? In the age of *video*? And besides, they're *old* books ... full of *time-worn* techniques. So who cares?” Well, if *you* have read this far, obviously *you* are of a different persuasion. So, may *The Juggler's Trilogy* inform, entertain, and provide insight into juggling in the heyday of vaudeville and variety. My reward for this effort is the quiet satisfaction of giving back to the art and craft that has enriched my life immeasurably. Happy reading.

– Reginald W. Bacon
Newburyport, Mass.
December 2020