

# Castanets

## Study of Rhythm Music

Book 1

Method

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ADVISE FOR TEACHERS</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>CASTANETS. The Study of Musical Rhythm.</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION to the Special Musical Notation for the Castanets</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>1. The Two Line Staff.</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>2. Numbering of the Fingers</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>3. Finger Nos. 3 and 7</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>THEORY OF MUSIC and Concepts of Musical Language</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>4. Note Values.</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>5. Rests or Pauses</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>6. Measures.</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>7. Measures of Rests.</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>YOU AND THE CASTANETS. Handling and Holding the Instrument</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>8. Postion for Studying</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>9. Heavy Notes</b> .....	<b>12</b>
Eleven Daily Exercises With Heavy Notes .....	<b>13</b>
<b>10. 2/4 Time</b> .....	<b>16</b>
Practice of the Metric Accent in 2/4 Time .....	<b>16</b>
Five Exercises for Practicing the Metric Accents in 2/4 Time .....	<b>17</b>
Exercises with Half Notes in 2/4 Time .....	<b>18</b>
Work No. 1 (practice of half notes and quarter notes in 2/4 time): The Shepherdess and The Dance of St. Ferriol .....	<b>19</b>
<b>11. 4/4 Time</b> .....	<b>20</b>
Practice of the Metric Accent 4/4 Time .....	<b>20</b>
Five Exercises for Practicing the Metric Accent in 4/4 time .....	<b>21</b>
Exercises for Practicing Whole Notes .....	<b>23</b>
Exercise for Practicing Half Notes in 4/4 Time .....	<b>23</b>
No. 2 (practice of 4 beats that are the equalivent of a whole note): Sonatina, Op. 36, No. 1 .....	<b>24</b>
<b>12. 3/4 Time</b> .....	<b>26</b>
Metric Accent in 3/4 Time .....	<b>26</b>
Six Exercises for Practicing the Metric Accent in 3/4 Time .....	<b>27</b>
Work No. 3 (practice of half notes and quarter notes in 3/4 time): Mazurka, Op. 7, No. 1 .....	<b>29</b>
<b>13. The Coda</b> .....	<b>30</b>
Work No. 4 (practice of half notes and quarter notes in 2/4 time with finger changes on the quarter notes): Anna-Polka, Op. 117 .....	<b>30</b>
Work No. 5 (practice of half notes and quarter notes in 2/4 time with finger changes of the second finger): Throughout the World With Happniess .....	<b>32</b>
<b>14. The Dot</b> .....	<b>33</b>
Exercises for Practicing Dotted Half Notes .....	<b>33</b>
Two Exercises in 4/4 Time with Varied Rhythms .....	<b>34</b>
Work No. 6 (practice of half notes, dotted half notes and quarter notes): Minuet .....	<b>34</b>
<b>15. The Fermata or Hold</b> .....	<b>36</b>
Work No. 7 (practice of all note values in this volume): Stephanie Gavotte .....	<b>36</b>
<b>PREPARING FOR THE SECOND VOLUME</b> .....	<b>38</b>
Five Excecises for Practicing Eighth Notes .....	<b>38</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS of the Exercices included in the CD</b> .....	<b>40</b>

# INTRODUCTION

## *to the Special Musical Notation for the Castanets*

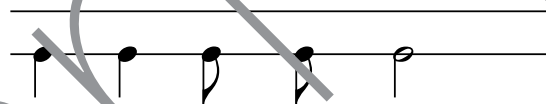
### 1. The Two-line Staff

The two-line staff consists of two parallel lines on which the notes for the castanets are written.

The notes for the right hand are written on the top line with the notes stems pointing up, called PI:



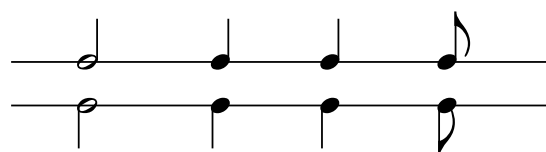
The notes for the left hand are written on the lower line with the note stems pointing down, called TA:



The space between the two lines is used to notate a strike of both castanets together, called “pos-ticeos” (a spark strike with the castanets positioned in front of you which should be made without using the elbows), called TIN:

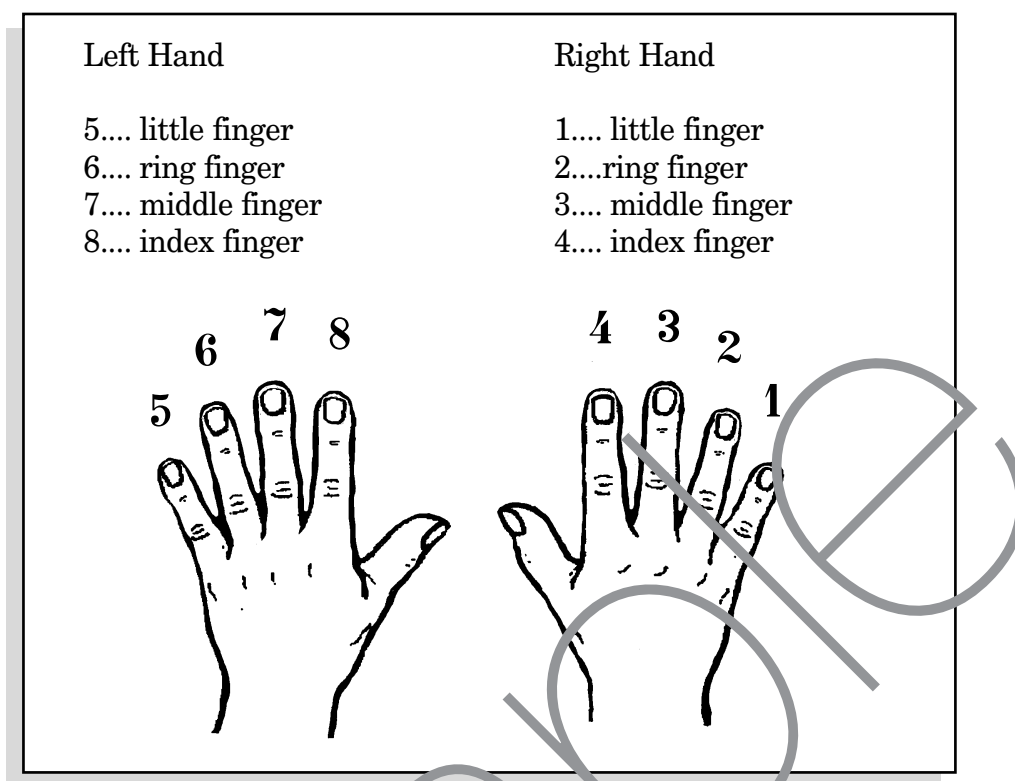


Two notes written together, one below the other, indicate that they are to be played with both hands at the same time, called TAN:



## 2. Finger Numbers

(As Used for the Castanets)



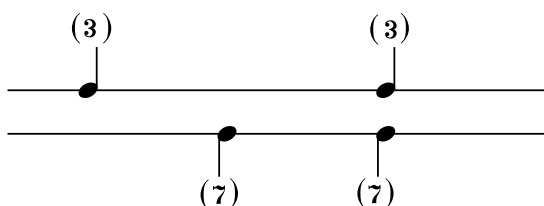
The finger numbers act as a reference for the exercises and compositions included in the first book. In the later books it will not be necessary to indicate them.

## 3. Fingers Nos. 3 and 7

An individual note written on the upper line with the stem pointing up indicates a strike with the 3rd finger (PI).

An individual note written on the lower line with the stem pointing down indicates a strike with the 7th finger (TA).

Two individual notes, one over the other, indicate a simultaneous strike with the 3rd and 7th fingers, (TAN).



# YOU AND THE CASTANETS

## *How to Use and Hold the Instrument*

### **8. The Position for Studying**

When beginning to study these exercises it is recommended that you stand, rather than sit, in order to maintain the correct posture.



- The arms should be separated from the body.
- The elbows should be floating in the air, the eyes looking forward, and the body should not be leaning on any piece of furniture. The most important thing to remember is to maintain the angle between the elbow and the shoulder, but without being stiff or rigid.
- The palms of the hands should be facing the student, placed a little below the waist.
- The fingers of both hands close together, but without touching.
- The wrists should be slightly turned inward but not forced too far, since that could cause harm to the wrists.
- The castanets should be facing each other, hanging from the thumbs and separated from the palms of the hands.
- The thumbs should be slightly stretched out.
- Keep your back straight and your head comfortably centered between your shoulders.
- This position requires you to maintain a gentle curve from the forehead toward the fingers.

The wrist must remain motionless and only the finger indicated for each note should move. The finger stays on the castanet during the equivalent of a quarter note and then returns to its natural position. There should be no movement of that finger nor of the finger indicated for the following note until the previous finger returns to its natural position alongside the other fingers.

All of these exercises are played with appropriate musical accompaniment, first at a slow tempo, so that the mind can learn to control all movements. Each strike should occur at its precise moment which coincides with the exact rhythm of the music and divides the measure into equal parts.

It is important to remember that only the fingers make the sound with the castanets. The hands and arms do not move.

At the beginning of the course, after working for a few minutes, it is necessary to rest for a short time, lowering the arms to relieve the inevitable tension until the student has acquired sufficient strength in the fingers and has learned how to make the fingers independent from the rest of the hand, arms and shoulders.

Remember that when studying technique muscular tension is our worst enemy.

### ELEVEN DAILY EXERCISES WITH HEAVY NOTES

(See the Explanation of 2/4 Time on p. 16)



01 a 11

«A nos jeunes filles» Young Girls- (excerpt) - B. Smetana

♩ = 46

**1** 01

**2** 02