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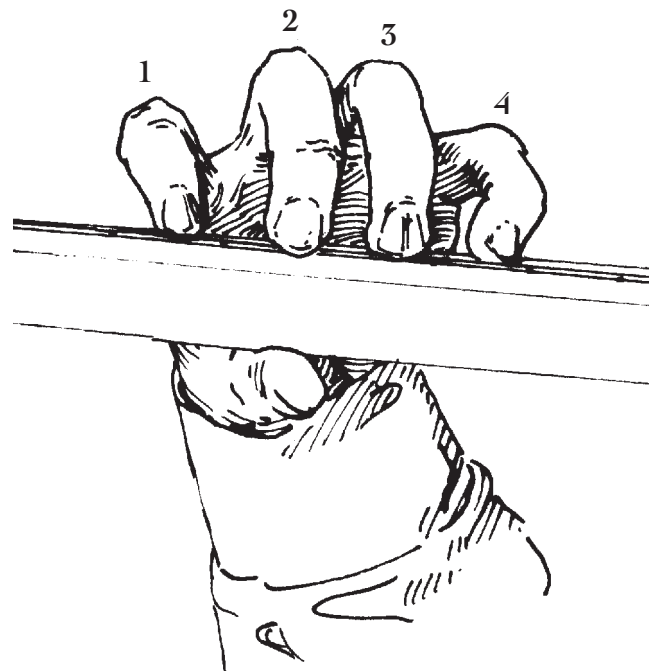
THE LEFT HAND

Finger Placement and Accuracy

It is vital that one adopt a strong left-hand “stance” and place the fingers in a position which allows for maximum reach and flexibility.

As you can see from the illustration below, the fingers of the left hand are not all placed on the center of the fingertips. Rather, an advantageous position for the left hand is as follows:

1. The first finger (1) plays on the left side of its tip.
2. The second finger (2) plays just to the left of its tip.
3. The third finger (3) plays just to the right of its tip.
4. The fourth finger (4) makes contact on the right side of its tip.



This position brings the larger muscles on either side of the hand into play, not necessarily to support fingers 1 and 4 (although this is a benefit), but to balance the whole hand and give it a stronger, more secure stance. It also allows for greater finger dexterity.

Notice the space between the middle joints of each finger. They're not touching! Not only are they not touching, but there is an intentional amount of extra space. This allows the fingers to spread apart and reach with greater speed when necessary. Never allow these joints to touch. This actually takes more muscular effort than keeping them apart, and the buzzword of this book is “economy”: *economy of effort, economy of energy, economy of motion.*

As for the thumb, keep it just under the second finger. This helps to distribute the pressure evenly between the fingers and thumb, creating a sort of vise.

Balance in Chords

“Balancing Act” is a study designed to help you develop control of the right-hand fingers through regulation of finger pressure on the strings. The *ossia staff* (smaller, alternate staff) shows the note that should be stressed in each chord.

Here are the things you should keep in mind:

1. Make sure the first three and final two chords of the study are well-balanced, with all notes even in volume and tone. Feel each string depressed equally.
2. Bring out the indicated note in each chord by applying more pressure to that string.
3. Start by applying equal pressure to all the strings involved—feel them displaced equally. Then, with the right-hand finger corresponding to the note to be accentuated, displace (move) that string down a little more than the others. Release and follow through. The finger that presses down more should follow-through a little more than the others. Try to feel it rather than think about it.

NOTE:

The tactile awareness required to focus this way is not only important for bringing out certain notes, but for successful and secure playing in general. It’s often the missing link between a “good” player and a “great” player.

Balancing Act

Scott Tennant

The musical score for "Balancing Act" is presented in three systems, each with a main staff and an ossia staff (smaller, alternate staff). The first system shows three chords with fingerings 1, 0, 2, 3 and 0, 0, 4, 3, with an 'i' above the first string and 'm' above the second string. The second system shows a sequence of chords with fingerings 1, 3, 2, 0 and 0, 0, 0, 0, with an 'i' above the first string and 'm' above the second string. The third system shows a sequence of chords with fingerings 4, 2, 3, 1 and 0, 0, 3, 2, with an 'i' above the first string and 'm' above the second string. The score includes dynamic markings like 'p' and 'i'.

#8

Fix on ③ :

The image displays six staves of musical notation for exercise #8. Each staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. The first two staves have a grey vertical bar covering the first two measures. A bracket labeled "Fix on ③ :" spans the first two measures of the first staff. Each staff contains a sequence of notes with fingerings indicated by numbers 1-5. The key signature changes to one flat (Bb) after the second measure of each staff. The notation includes various note values (quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes) and rests. The exercise concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

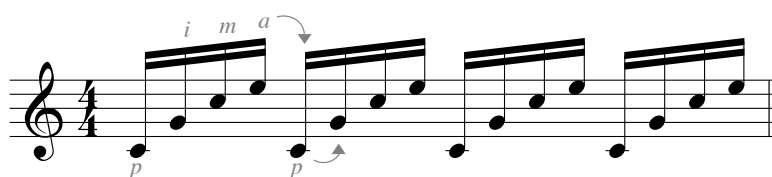
ARPEGGIOS

A few explanations are necessary before you begin to study the many arpeggio patterns provided in this section.

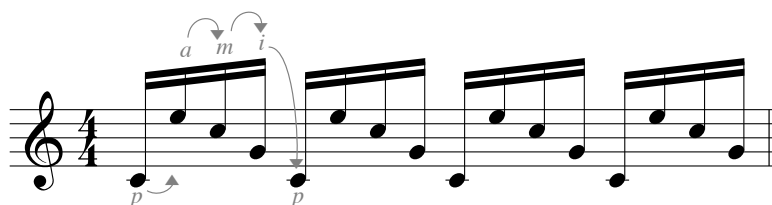
Full Planting and Sequential Planting

There are two ways of preparing the fingers on the strings that facilitate the playing of arpeggios. *Full planting* means that all the fingers involved in an arpeggio (excluding the thumb after the pattern has begun) are planted simultaneously. This is almost exclusively done in ascending arpeggios. *Sequential planting* involves planting the fingers one at a time, as needed (including the thumb), and is applied to descending arpeggios, and, in practice, most others as well.

Full Plant: Before playing, *p-i-m-a* are placed on the strings. After *a* plays, *p* is planted; after *p* plays, *i-m-a* are planted, and so on.



Sequential Plant: Plant *p*; after it plays, plant *a*; after it plays, plant *m*; after it plays, immediately plant *i*; after it plays, plant *p*, and so on.



Combining full and sequential planting: In an arpeggio that ascends and descends, use a full plant on the ascending portion of the arpeggio, and plant sequentially on the descending portion.

