

Francis Grant Cello Series

Beginner's Guide to the Cello: Book 1

Francis Grant



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Preface

Beginner's Guide to the Cello was written to provide young students with a beginning method adapted to their special needs and capabilities. It is designed as an introduction to cello playing, to be followed by my earlier and more mature *Fundamentals of Violoncello Technique*.

In the past, study of the cello by young persons has been limited to those who had reached a physical development sufficient to cope with the demands of a full-sized instrument. Fortunately, this situation no longer prevails. Excellent instruments in three-quarter, one-half, one-quarter and even smaller sizes are now readily available, thus permitting very young children to begin the serious study of the cello.

The remaining problem, the selection of appropriate study material, has been met by *Beginner's Guide to the Cello*. Heretofore, the choice has been between the slow and laborious use of a method intended for older persons or the selection of a book written originally for all string instruments for use in a public school class situation. Neither choice has been desirable for the private cello student.

The objective of the *Beginner's Guide to the Cello* is to provide interesting material with which the conscientious teacher can "build" a cellistic posture of the hands and body and lay the groundwork for future development. Specific requirements of a technical nature, such as playing in the various parts of the bow and holding the fingers in place, have been omitted for several reasons. First, to present a clear and uncluttered page, which is a primary obligation in writing for the untrained eye; and second, the use of such signs and abbreviations in elementary instruction is considered to be less effective than verbal directions from the teacher. The teacher is free, therefore, to exercise his or her own judgment and impose his or her own requirements in these matters.

Supplementary solo material with piano accompaniment which parallels these volumes will be found in *48 Folk Songs for Strings*, also published by LudwigMasters Publications.

—Francis Grant

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About the Composer

Francis Grant was a member of the Cleveland Orchestra during the years when it was conducted by Nikolai Sokoloff and Arthur Rodzinski. Following his retirement from active orchestral playing, he devoted his full time to teaching and the study of performance practices of early music on the cello and the viola da gamba. Solo and ensemble recitals of these instruments have rounded out a performance career that culminated in the writing and editing of numerous pedagogical works. His extensive experience in teaching has resulted in the publication of study materials that are both practical and effective in the development of young cellists.



The bow on the A string.



The bow on the D string.



The bow on the G string.



The bow on the C string.



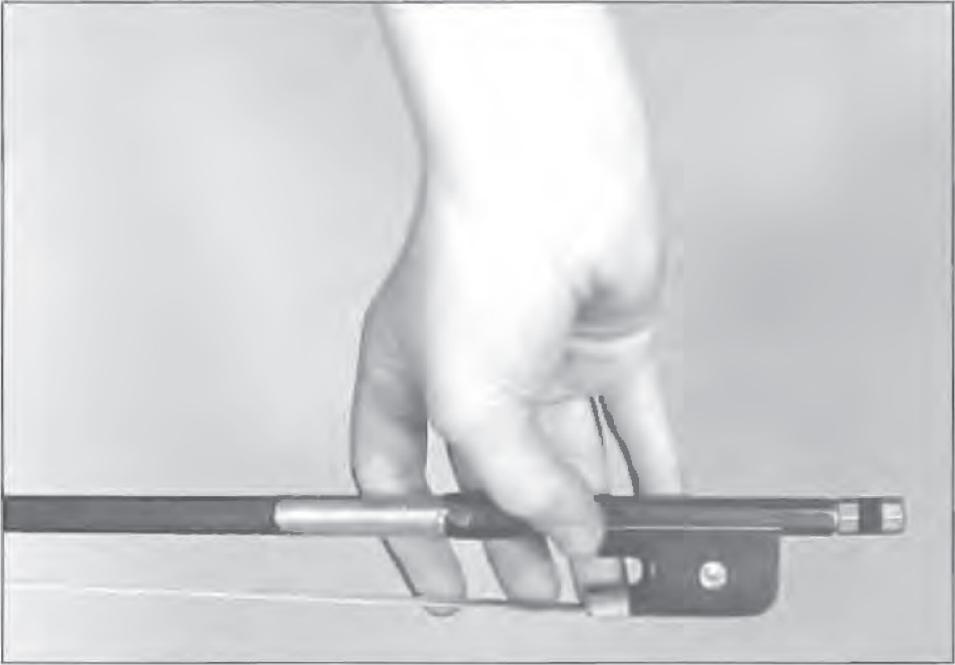
The fingers of the right hand.



The left hand in normal position (short stretch).



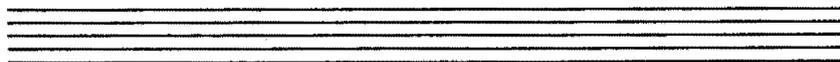
The left hand in extended position (long stretch).



The thumb on the bow.

ELEMENTS OF NOTATION USED IN THIS BOOK

1. Music is written on a **STAFF** which consists of five parallel lines and four spaces.



2. The music in this book is written in the **F** or **BASS CLEF**. This sign appears at the beginning of each line and tells us that the fourth line is called **F**.



3. Here are the names of all the lines and spaces. Notice that additional lines are added above and below the staff. They appear only when needed and extend the range of the staff. They are called **LEGER LINES**.



4. Lines drawn vertically through the staff are called **BAR LINES**. They divide the staff into small sections which we call **MEASURES**. A **DOUBLE BAR** indicates that we have reached the end of the piece or exercise.



5. A **TIME SIGNATURE** is always placed at the beginning of a piece or exercise. It consists of two numbers (one placed above the other) that tell us several things. Out of many different time signatures here are two that we shall use and their meaning.

$$\frac{4}{4} = \frac{\text{four counts in a measure}}{\text{a quarter note gets one count}}$$

$$\frac{3}{4} = \frac{\text{three counts in a measure}}{\text{a quarter note gets one count}}$$

6. **NOTES** and **RESTS** may be long or short. The notes indicate that we should play, while the rests indicate that we should be silent. For every note there is a rest of equal value. Here is a table of the most common notes, with their rests, and the length of time each is held.

NOTES	=	RESTS	=	
○ (whole note)	=	▬ (whole rest)	=	4 counts
◡ (half note)	=	▬ (half rest)	=	2 counts
♪ (quarter note)	=	∩ (quarter rest)	=	1 count
♩ (eighth note)	=	∩ (eighth rest)	=	½ count

7. A **SHARP** (**#**) is a sign that tells us the note before which it is placed is to be raised one half step in pitch. A **FLAT** (**b**) is a sign that tells us the note before which it is placed is to be lowered one half step in pitch. A **NATURAL** (**♮**) is a sign that tells us to cancel a previous sharp or flat.

