



# Simandl-*Plus*<sup>®</sup> Fingering Strategies

*All fingering strategies assume the use of “closed hand” (traditional Simandl 1-2-4) unless otherwise noted.*

## Melodic Gestures and Rhythm

- 1 Have at least two notes per position. (Rests and open strings count as a note.) — This strategy can be abandoned in lyrical playing, especially in thumb position.
- 2a When a melodic gesture (a series of pitches before it changes direction) ends on a stable beat (or on a stable subdivision of the beat), it is almost always best to shift on a mobile beat (or on a mobile subdivision of the beat).
- 2b When a melodic gesture ends on a mobile beat, (or on a mobile subdivision of the beat), it is almost always best to shift on a stable beat, (or on a stable subdivision of the beat).

*Because almost all melodic gestures end on a stable beat or on a stable subdivision of the beat (in classical music, at least), it is almost always best to shift on a mobile beat, or on a mobile subdivision of the beat.*

## “Money” Notes and Lower Numbered Fingers

- 3) Use lower numbered fingers (1 & 2) when possible, especially in lyrical playing.
- 4) Use the second finger for “money” notes. Though the second finger is preferable, the first finger can be used on “money” notes as well. (See “Function of each of the fingers”.)  
— It usually works well with lyrical playing in thumb position to use the second finger (or the first) for *every* note.

## String Crossings

- 5) Avoid using the same finger across two strings, even with perfect fourths (especially in lyrical playing.) Exception: When alternating back and forth across two strings.
- 6) Avoid playing two (or more) open strings in a row.
- 7) In scalar passages, play at least two notes on a string before crossing to a new string. (A rest counts as a note.)
- 8) If practical, choose a fingering that allows a string crossing on adjacent strings, rather than one that requires skipping a string.

## Tempo

- 9a) In lyrical playing, avoid open strings and “open hand”<sup>\*</sup> fingerings, opting for more shifts.
- 9b) In fast playing, use more efficient fingerings: use less shifts, and when you *do* shift, travel the shortest distance possible; use open strings, and “open hand”<sup>\*</sup> fingerings.
- 10) You may use an open string only if the note is shorter than a beat, and if the open string does not create an unnecessary string crossing. (Also, see Fingering Strategy 6.) However, in moderately slow or slow tempi, a note may best be played closed instead of with an open string, even if it is shorter than a beat.

<sup>\*</sup> Also called “extension”, “4-finger”, or “Franke system” fingerings.

<sup>\*\*</sup> Simandl (1-2-4) hand position.



# Simandl-Plus<sup>®</sup> Fingering Strategies

## Triangulation of Fingering Systems<sup>®</sup>

- 11) You can use the “closed hand”<sup>★★</sup> fingering for almost all slow to moderately fast passages in the “neck register”.
- 12) Use “open hand”<sup>★</sup> fingering system only in: a) *extremely* fast passages; b) when you want a passage (of any speed) to be clean (free of portamenti); c) when a passage hovers around a third; and d) to reverse the stable beat/mobile beat arrangement of shifts.
- 13) Use thumb position in, of course, the “thumb position register”. But, you may also use the thumb below the first octave harmonic.

## Transitional Fingers

- 14) In the “closed hand”<sup>★★</sup> fingering system, use the third finger rather than the fourth finger higher than a two ledger-line E on the G-string (and on the same “fret” for all other strings). Notes *on* the “E fret” may be played with either the third or the fourth finger.
- 15) Use the second finger rather than the third finger higher than a treble clef top space E on the G-string (and on the same “fret” for all other strings). Notes *on* this “E fret” may be played with either the second or the third finger.

## Fingering Notation Suggestions:

(All fingering notations appear *over* the notes. Alternate fingerings may appear *below* the notes.)

- 1) Indicate a fingering number only for a note that requires a shift.
- 2) If it is helpful to indicate a fingering for a note that does not require a shift (“reminder fingerings”), enclose that fingering in parentheses.
- 3) String indications should be notated with a letter (G, D, A, or E, *not* roman numerals) over the fingering number.
- 4) Indicate all open strings with an “o”.
- 5) Indicate “open hand”<sup>★★</sup> fingerings by placing a bracket over the fingering and the notes that are contained in that position. Ex.:  $\overbrace{1}$
- 6) To “bridge” one finger across two strings when playing a perfect fourth (or minor sevenths across three strings, or minor tenths across four strings), indicate the finger number followed by two parallel lines over the notes that require the “bridging” fingering. Ex.:  $2\text{=====}$
- 7) When playing a perfect fourth across two strings (or minor sevenths or minor tenths) with two different fingers, but not shifting (guitar style), draw two parallel lines between both fingering numbers. Ex.:  $1\text{=====}2$
- 8) When playing a perfect fourth across two strings (or minor sevenths or minor tenths) with the same finger, (not bridging nor playing with two different fingers in one position) indicate both fingerings within parentheses and without the parallel lines.  
Ex.: (2 2)

\* Also called “extension”, “4-finger”, or “Franke system” fingerings.

★★ Simandl (1-2-4) hand position.