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Care and Maintenance of Your Stringed Instrument

Protection

Always keep your instrument and bow in the case when it is not in use. Make sure the bow hair has been loosened before putting the bow in the case and secure the bow properly. Make the case is zipped up and/or latched properly before transporting the instrument.

How to loosen the bow hair

All bows have a screw at the end. Turning the screw to the right will make the horse hair tighter. Turning the screw to the left makes the horse hair looser. If you leave the bow too tight the bow will warp and damage the horse hair. If you are not playing the instrument, the bow should be loosened.

Temperature

The instrument should not be exposed to extreme temperature changes. Do not expose the instrument or the instrument in the case to direct sunlight. Do not leave instrument in a vehicle for long period of time during winter cold or summer hot temperatures. Do not keep instruments near wood burning fireplaces or stoves.

Humidity

Stringed instruments are best maintained at 40-50% relative humidity. In the winter months please use the instrument humidifier (Dampit) provided with your rental instrument. A humidified instrument will stay in tune longer and be less likely to crack. Repairs for cracks and open seams caused by low humidity will be charged to your account.

Cleaning

Rosin dust should be wiped off after each time playing with a cotton or microfiber cloth. Wipe both the body of the instrument and the strings of the instrument. Do not use household cleaners to clean the instrument. Do not use any wet liquids on the instrument or bow.

The Bow

Never touch the bow hair with your fingers. Your fingers contain oils that can damage the hair. Do not tighten the bow too much. The middle of the bow should have a pencil width of space between the wooden part of the bow and the hair. The bow should be rosined once a day by applying rosin with three downward strokes across top of rosin. After done playing, loosen the tension of the bow hair and place the bow back in the case.

The Bridge

The bridge should only be adjusted by the instructor.

Strings

The strings should only be changed by the instructor. Students will learn to tune their instruments once they have reached a certain understanding of intonation and instrumental techniques.

Fine Tuners

Please make sure the fine tuners do not touch the top of the instrument. If your tuner has a lever under the tailpiece, guard against the lever touching the top of the instrument. This can seriously scratch and damage the wood on the instrument.

Chinrests

The buzzing sound in an instrument can be caused by a loose chinrest. The chinrest should only be tightened by the instructor.

Pegs

The pegs of the instrument can sometimes slip in the winter months because of dry conditions. Pegs that are hard to turn are often caused by high humidity. There are adjustments that can be done for both problems but should only be done by the instructor. Sometimes pegs will need to be re-drilled or replaced if there has been extreme wear.