

CLAIRE GIVENS VIOLINS, INC.

Established 1977

Dealers, Makers & Restorers of Fine Violins, Violas, Cellos & Bows

HOW TO CARE FOR YOUR INSTRUMENT & BOW

Instruments

Humidity Understanding the effects of humidity on an instrument is extremely important. During the winter months or in a very dry climate, it is important that humidity be kept at least at 35% (50% is ideal). Instruments will crack if subjected to a very dry atmosphere and have poor sound quality. Always keep your instruments away from heating devices. The use of a power-type humidifier is ideal. However, the type of humidifier which can be placed directly in your case or instrument, such as Dampit, is of some help if the case is kept closed when the instrument is not in use. In a damp climate or during the summer months, try to keep your instrument in an air-conditioned room where the humidity is lower.

Temperature Do not leave your instrument in a closed car or in a room where the temperature is very high. Intense heat can damage the varnish and even melt the glue which holds the instrument together. Allow some time for your instrument to adjust to temperature changes, such as when transporting an instrument from the cold into a warm room. Rapid changes in temperature can cause cracks.

Pegs Do not force a peg that will not move easily. To avoid problems, use a peg compound such as Hills. Your violinmaker should be consulted to remove stuck pegs.

Fingerboard It is natural for grooves develop on fingerboards from playing. An instrument's fingerboard should be checked periodically to determine if it needs "dressing."

Bridge Some players need two bridges for their instrument; one for the winter and one for summer. A proper fit and arch is most important. We suggest that your violinmaker make this change for you. Periodically, you will have to pull your bridge back or to prevent it from warping. We are happy to show you how to do this.

Soundpost Do not try to adjust the soundpost yourself; you could damage the top of your instrument. If the soundpost should fall, loosen the tension on the strings immediately and contact your repair person to have it properly set up and adjusted.

Polish After you have finished playing, wipe from the strings and wood any loose rosin with a soft cloth. Occasionally use a polish and cleaner. It is important that no residue of polish be left on the varnish.

Strings We gauge all of our strings and will suggest to you the proper brand and gauge for your instrument.

General Checkups Every six months, have your instrument looked at by a professional violinmaker to check for open seams, cracks, and proper alignment of the bridge and post.

How to Care for Your Instrument & Bow, cont.

Bows

Rehairing Reasons to rehair a bow include:

- Hair is too long or too short
- Hair is dirty
- Hair is thin or broken
- Wedges are coming loose
- Poor performance

Always have your bows worked on by someone knowledgeable about bows. Bows are extremely fragile and they require skilled and experienced handling. Bow hair is very sensitive to moisture. When the humidity is high, the hair will be longer than when the air is dry. It is important that the hair not be too long, as the balance of the bow will be affected and damage may result from tightening too much. Long hair also exposes more of the stick to thumb wear. If the hair becomes too short, it is best to have it rehaired for the correct climate or season.

Brass Eyelet Have the eyelet checked every time you have your bow rehaired. If the bow hair will not tighten, the eyelet is likely the problem. To help avoid replacing the eyelet, use a bow lubricant periodically.

Tip Plate Aside from its decorative function, the tip plate protects the fragile head of your bow. The tip plate should be checked periodically to make sure it is not cracked or loose. When replacing a tip plate, it is important to maintain the aesthetic integrity of the bow, especially that of a valuable bow.

The Shaft (Stick) Even the finest French bows will at times require straightening. Leave this to a skilled bowmaker and repair person. Cracks in the stick or frog should be tended to as soon as possible; the longer they are allowed to remain open, the more difficult they become to repair. Broken heads can usually be repaired with no ill effect on the playing qualities, although market value will be drastically affected.

Frog Check occasionally to see that the pearl slide, eyes, etc., are in good order. A worn pearl slide allows erosion of the surrounding wood. A pearl eye should be replaced before this occurs. Many things can contribute to difficulty moving a frog: irregularities in the screw, the eyelet, the fit of the screw and button to the stick, or dirt, rust, or adjustment. Most of these problems are easily corrected; a few require more extensive work, such as bushing and re-drilling the end of the stick. It is important that the frog not be too loose on the stick, as the frog can easily be damaged if there is any side-to-side play.

Rosin There are a number of very fine rosins available on the market. We can suggest to you the most popular brands for players of your instrument. During the summer months or in a damp, humid climate, use a light rosin which contains little wax. A dark rosin is best during the winter or in a dry climate. We carry both types year-round.