

SCSBOA FALL CONFERENCE SEPTEMBER 8TH, 2007

NUTS AND PEGS:
**“INFORMATION ABOUT WHAT IS GOOD EQUIPMENT FOR YOUR
ORCHESTRA AND HOW TO MAINTAIN IT.”**

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“Be at the right time, at the right place, with the right EQUIPMENT, and the right attitude!!!” Fred Ohlendorf

HOW DO YOU TELL THE GOOD STUFF FROM THE BAD?

- 1) Wood quality: purfling, flame of wood, closeness of grain
- 2) Pegs turn easily, fingerboard and varnish is not sticky or smelly, bridge is straight, chin rest stays on, string vibration clears the fingerboard, no rattles or buzzes.
- 3) Hit around the edge to check for cracks or seam openings.
- 4) Bow material: fiberglass, cherrywood, brazilwood, pernambuco, carbon fiber (in that order, more or less) real horsehair vs. synthetic, bow tightens easily and correctly.

INSTRUMENT PURCHASES

- 1) **Establish a relationship with a reputable store specializing in string instruments.** Morey’s Music Store, Lakewood, CA (562) 420-9532 Jonathan or David Morey
- 2) Purchase only “shop-adjusted” instruments. Many school instruments do not come from the manufacturer in a playable condition.
- 3) Specify the strings you want. (Dominant strings)
- 4) Specify bow type you want (type of material, bow hair, German or French bass bow, etc.)
- 5) Have local private teachers/musicians check your first purchase for quality.
- 6) In most cases, more expensive quality string instruments will last much longer than less expensive, cheaper ones.
- 7) **CORRECT SIZE of Instruments:** 15-15 ½ inch violas for middle/high school students ¾ size basses for high school students, ½ or ¾ for middle school.

TAKING CARE OF WHAT YOU'VE GOT!!

- 1) Clean instruments and bows with a quality instrument varnish cleaner/polish—avoid greasy polishes, and remember to use the cleaner/polish sparingly. Do not use commercial furniture polish—they usually contain wax and ingredients that are not good for instrument varnishes.
- 2) Loosen all bow tensions until the bow hair almost touches the stick.
- 3) Wipe all rosin off of strings.
- 4) Clean the black part of the fingerboard/ strings (only the black part/top part) and chinrests with rubbing alcohol (do not get any alcohol on the varnished wood)
- 5) Retract all endpins fully into the instrument and tighten ONLY AS TIGHT AS NEEDED TO HOLD (if they are bent or the tightening screws are broken, get them replaced.)
- 6) Re-hair bows regularly and make sure the length of hair is correct. Bow hair that never tightens or loosens to the proper level may not be a sign of a bad bow but a sign of improper re-hairing.
- 7) Save bow screws by pinching frog between fingers while turning.
- 8) Cracks- check visually and try tapping around instrument. Fix immediately.
- 9) Bridge placement-line up directly between notches in f-hole. Make sure low Side of the bridge is on the highest string, straighten regularly
- 10) Chin- Rest- tighten just to the point where it will stay put and still move slightly- do not over tighten.
- 11) Rattles – Check for loose jewelry, buttons, etc. Check chin rest, fine tuners, unwinding strings, loose bass bar, cracks.
- 12) Peg Compound: use it, but a temporary fix for poorly adjusted pegs
- 13) Changing strings: lubricate with a soft pencil at the nut and bridge, cross the string on the peg at the top, keep string away from the side of peg box, wind straight down, keep fine tuners up

MOST IMPORTANT: DO NOT LEAVE YOUR INSTRUMENT IN ANY PLACE YOU WOULD NOT LEAVE A HUMAN BEING. HEAT, COLD, VIBRATIONS, AND HUMIDITY ALL AFFECT A STRING INSTRUMENT.