

INSTRUMENT CARE CHECKLIST

Every time you play

- **Check for bridge straightness.** The back of the bridge should be 90 degrees to the top, feet firmly in place with no gaps front or back of the feet. If your bridge is leaning, adjust it so it is upright. If you're not comfortable doing this, we can help you. A leaning bridge if left under tension will warp, and a warped bridge over time will break. Catch it early to prevent costly repairs!
- **Loosen your bow hair before storing in the case.** Loosening the bow prevents the hair from stretching and maintains the curve of the stick, and will better protect the bow against other accidental damage.
- **Clean rosin and perspiration** off the instrument body and strings, and the bow stick and frog, with a soft cloth. Avoid touching the bow hair.

Annually

- **Install new strings** (maybe twice a year depending on how often you play.) Old strings will start to sound dull and become unresponsive, or return a "false" note. When changing strings, lubricate the pegs with Hill peg compound, and apply graphite from a pencil in the string slots in the nut and on the bridge. Do this one string at a time to prevent string tension coming off the instrument entirely. Keep an eye on your bridge for straightness as you bring new strings to pitch.
- **Get your bow rehaired** (maybe twice a year depending on how often you play.) Old hair will lose its tooth and start to "skate" over the strings/not grip as well as new.
- **Visit your luthiers for a checkup for your instrument and bow.** Annually is a good guideline, or in accordance with new strings and a bow rehair, or any time you notice a change in sound or something not functioning the way you expect.

With seasonal and environmental changes

- **Humidify your instrument in the winter or in dry climates.** Providing humidity to the smaller environment of your case is easiest. Invest in a good in-case humidifier and leave your instrument in the case, closed when not in use, and away from outside walls and heat sources. Keep to 35-45% humidity or higher. Low humidity is a risk for cracks or other damage.
- If you have to travel with your instrument in and out of temperature extremes, leave the instrument closed in its case for five minutes when you arrive at your destination, **allowing it to acclimate to the room** before opening the case.
- **Avoid leaving your instrument in a hot car or direct sunlight-** too much heat can result in damage to the varnish and may cause additional issues.
- **Check for seasonal shifts in your setup.** Especially cellists will notice changes in string heights and may need a seasonal bridge, and seasonal adjustments for sound and performance may be necessary.

If the tension comes off your instrument and the bridge falls, do not attempt to stand it yourself as the soundpost may have shifted or fallen. Tuck a cloth under the tailpiece and bring it in so we can help you. Never force something that is not working (for example your bow screw, pegs, fine tuners, or endpin screw). We are happy to take a look.

We recommend you purchase musical instrument insurance to protect your investment in your instrument.