

HOW DO I CHOOSE AN INSTRUMENT?



What makes a good student instrument?

It's a question we're often asked. And a good question too! There are so many places, websites and catalogue shops offering 'great deals' on violins these days that it could become overwhelming. So let's take a closer look at this 'great' deal. It is of all importance that you should be able to contact the store you're buying from to confirm a few details. Can you help me choose the correct size? Will the instrument be set up correctly? Is the violin suited to my child's level of playing? Does it have ebony fittings? What strings is it fitted with? Are the tuning pegs running smoothly? Have the bridge, the fingerboard, the nut and the soundpost all been checked to ensure the instrument is easy to play and feels good to the hand? We will accurately answer, and confirm where necessary, all these and any other questions you may have.

At Caswells we believe the beginnings are critical; if you start right the motivation will be much greater and the chances of the student continuing will be much higher.

— A good quality instrument should have —

Ebony pegs correctly fitted and turning smoothly

Correct string spacing at the nut

Correct string height at 3rd position

Ebony fingerboard, not black painted wood

Arched top and back

Inlaid purfling

Quality strings

Bridge shape and height correct

Soundpost correctly positioned

Easy to use finetuning adjusters

Bow and case of corresponding quality

VSOs - Violin Shaped Objects

Warning on behalf of Teachers, Violin shops and musicians countrywide – sightings of 'Violin Shaped Objects' are becoming more and more common in classrooms. Cheap internet-auction violin outfits, commonly known as V.S.O.s often look like violins but, sadly, are virtually unplayable due to irreparable structural problems, bad or non-existent set up, and bargain-basement strings. Many well-meaning parents bring their V.S.O.s into violin shops countrywide and are disappointed to find that, if repair is possible to make it playable, the cost far exceeds the price they originally paid and even exceeds the price of a properly made and well set up instrument without any of the problems of a V.S.O.!

