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Tips from Adeline Kovell

Violin & accessories selection guide:

Instrument: A decent instrument is often paramount to a student's success. If the instrument does not sound good, the student will not sound good, and he or she will be less likely to want to continue playing. If the instrument sounds good, the student will like the sound, and will be more likely to continue. Do not buy instruments on Amazon because the student will not be able to try it ahead of time. Avoid violins that are not a natural wood color (e.g. green or blue), because I have never heard one that sounded good. I would recommend visiting a local music store (Amends or Hoffman) and trying the instruments in the student's size (they can measure the student for the correct size). For a beginner or a student who needs a smaller instrument, the most important thing is: does he or she like the sound? Even if the student has never played before, he or she can just bow the strings a little bit and see what happens. Also, try to decide which instrument sounds the loudest and least muffled. Volume is sometimes more important than tone at this stage.

Bows: For beginners and children, almost any bow will do, but not ordering online and avoiding suspicious appearances still applies. Check to see: is anything falling apart? Make sure the hair stretches from side to side of the ferrule (small silver square piece at the bottom of the bow). Are there gaps in the hair (avoid this)? Is the bow easy to tighten and loosen? The hair should be a white to yellowish color, NOT gray or black.

Strings: Don't worry about the brand of strings. The quality of the instrument is more important than the quality of the strings for beginners. Just make sure the size of the strings matches the size of the violin, and the correct string is in the correct place (I can tell you how to do that). Also, if you have no experience or are not confident about changing a string, bring it to me. It's better for the student to not practice for a week than to break something 😊

Rosin: Rosin is a necessity. For younger students, I care less about the type of rosin and more about how enjoyable it is to use. Is the lid easy to remove? Does it seem easy to drop and break, or is it packaged to be sturdy? The Super Sensitive brand is the most user-friendly, in my opinion.

Shoulder-rests: Shoulder-rests will improve the student's playing experience x10. The type does not matter too much, but the student should find it comfortable.

Other: If the shop tries to sell you anything else, including books, ask me first!

Assistance in Purchasing: We'd be more than happy to assist you in selecting an instrument and charge a \$50 fee to accompany and try out violins. Just let us know if you'd like to be guided through the process! Text/phone 509-230-8742 to schedule.