

Choosing a violin can definitely be a difficult decision when you are unsure of which one to purchase. Most people believe the more money you spend the better the instrument will sound. That is true to a certain extent however a great sounding instrument can be purchased for a small amount of money.

A few decisive factors when purchasing a violin include:

- Size
- Tone
- Age
- Condition/Beauty
- The Maker
- Price



Size is very important. Generally, you the player reaches a full-size (4/4) is the time to purchase. A fractional size (anything smaller than a full-size; 3/4, 1/2, 1/4, 1/8, 1/10, 1/16 and 1/32) is recommended to rent since the player will most likely outgrow the instrument.

Tone can be diverse to many people and described several ways: brilliant, clear, rich, warm, deep, smooth and so on. A violin needs to be loud and have lots of power but can never be too loud. Remember the violin will sound louder to the player than the audience since the sound coming out of the violin is approximately three inches away from your ear.

With age the wood hardens and becomes more resonant; which is why an older or “vintage” instrument will generally sound better than a new instrument. However, a good new violin will improve with age.

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Just because an instrument has scratches doesn't mean it won't sound good. Most people want a beautiful instrument which is why people will be attracted towards a highly flamed instrument.

The maker isn't necessarily as important as many people think. Remember, a violin is made of wood and each piece vibrates differently. A spruce top is generally considered to be the best material. An instrument with solid wood (top and/or back and sides) along with ebony trim (pegs, fingerboard, tailpiece, chinrest and button) and maple bridge are the preferred choices for quality tone. In the end, don't let the brand name scare you when trying a violin. Every brand is going to have different levels of instruments and they are all going to sound different.

Just because a violin has a high price tag or has a well know brand name doesn't mean it will sound good to you. An intermediate to professional range is approximately \$900 to \$4,000. Determine how much are comfortable spending and then try out several violins in good condition in that price range.

Buyer Beware! Occasionally there are good buys on the internet but most of the time it is a bad idea. When buying a violin you will want to try the violin before buying it. The violin might be a great deal however unplayable.