

## **Guidelines for Handling SMF Instruments**

To pass down the instruments owned by the Sasakawa Music Foundation —many of which are now nearly 300 years old— to future generations while keeping them in optimal playable condition, the cooperation of our recipients—who use and play them daily, is essential.

We kindly ask for your understanding and cooperation in preserving these instruments for future generations by reviewing the guidelines and adhering to them.

- **No Polishing or Cleaning Solutions:**

Do not ever use any commercial polish or cleaning solutions of any kind. The designated workshops are also not allowed to polish the instrument with French polish or any other material as it could destroy the original varnish.

- **Cleaning:**

After each use, use only a clean piece of soft cotton to wipe down the violin. You shall not put any bottled cleaner or polish on the instrument. If you are handling the instrument properly there should never be anything on the violin that will not be wiped off easily with the soft cotton.

Rosin accumulation on the strings can be removed using a small piece of silk cloth. NO HEAVIER GAUZE SHOULD BE USED. When doing this, the violin top must be pointed toward the floor to avoid particles of rosin falling into or on the instrument, as these will act as an abrasive when you clean it off. Gently run the silk cloth along the strings between the top of the bridge and the end of the fingerboard. This will give you a cleaner sound and make it much easier to play harmonics.

- **No Hard Surface:**

Never lay your violin down without having a cloth underneath the violin.

- **Do Not Touch Body:**

The violin should always be handled by the neck and end-button. Do not grab the body of the instrument as oil from your hands can be damaging to the varnish.

- **Humidity Maintenance:**

When traveling by air or staying in dry hotel rooms, a dampit should be kept inside the instrument or a humidifier in the main compartment of the case in order to prevent cracks and open seams. Do not use any humidifying equipment prone to leakage. Before putting a dampit into the instrument, squeeze out any excess water to prevent damage to the instrument.

- **Accessories:**

When handling the instrument, DO NOT wear any accessories that could come in contact with the instrument, as they could damage the instrument.

- **Costumes:**

DO NOT wear costumes decorated with items that can easily peel off such as particles or glitter, and be mindful of sequins, buttons, jewelry, or metal objects on your clothing that could come into contact with the instrument.

- **Cosmetic Particles:**

DO NOT wear cosmetic products with glitter, and be mindful of cosmetic products with particles (loose powder, eyeshadow, etc.), as they could come off, fall on the instrument, and deteriorate the varnish. It is essential to ensure that the instrument-varnish does not come into contact with a make-up product, neither in direct contact nor with any sweat droplets

- **Perfume:**

To protect the instrument from varnish deterioration and odor transfer, DO NOT wear perfume when handling the instrument.

- **Chinrest:**

The chinrest must be placed over the middle block with two legs. If you would like to replace the chinrest, be sure to inquire with the Foundation for prior approval and consult a workshop designated by the Foundation for replacement.

- **Protection of Varnish from Sweat:**

Sweat causes varnish deterioration. Protect varnish from sweat and cosmetics such as by using handkerchief or chamois leather on the chinrest.

- **Shoulder rest:**

Before use, always examine the feet of your shoulder rest to make sure that the rubber has not worn through or shifted. The rubber must be changed on average every year or two in order to avoid the rubber hardening and potentially damaging the instrument. Always take special care when putting on or removing the shoulder rest since this is one of the most common causes of damage.

- **Bridge:**

The angle of the bridge should be looked at daily before use to ensure that it is not tilting forward or back too much.

- **Grooves:**

It is important to lubricate the groove in the top of the bridge and in the top nut. Please use only graphite pencil in hardness HB.

- **Strings:**

When changing strings, you must follow the method as shown in the drawing.

- **Noise/Wolf:**

Buzzing or rattling noises occur when the instrument has been in a dry place and the glue has come undone. In such cases, take the instrument to a workshop designated by the Foundation as soon as possible for repair. In most cases, when you think the instrument is out of adjustment, it is humidity-related issues and nothing to do with the position of the bridge or the soundpost.

- **Peg Paste:**

Apply special lubricant composition (peg paste) to the pegs as necessary to smoothen the pegs.

- **Changing Strings on Pegs:**

Pull strings through as shown in the drawing to allow only about one full turn round peg. When string is pulled up to pitch, cut off excess strings (there is no need to leave them long!).

