

10. You can meet, talk to and stay in touch with the maker of your instrument

As new instruments open up like a flower in the first few years, they need yearly checks for set-up, so they are sounding at their best. You can get this done by the very person who made the instrument and who is most 'in tune' (excuse the pun!) with it.

11. Modern instruments are often easier to play and respond more quickly

Old instruments can be very difficult to play, and contain many 'wolf tones' (Guarneri's Cannon, played by Paganini, is an example of this). You may find yourself struggling with an instrument that is difficult to play and slow to respond, while you could be enjoying your brand new instrument.

12. You can have a new instrument that looks old

Some violinmakers are skillful at 'antique-ing' their instrument, meaning you end up with all the solid workmanship of a new instrument combined with the charm and beauty of an old.

The above information is not to say that every old instrument is to be avoided, nor that every modern violin is going to be good. The real point is that each instrument should be judged on its own merits, and not bought simply because it is 'old'. Some violin dealers might stand more to gain by convincing you to buy an old Italian instrument, than a lower-priced modern instrument which may actually be the better option for you.

Modern instruments can, in fact, be a very favourable choice for many musicians who want an affordable instrument of power, character and beauty.

If you are looking for further information on how to go about trying out instruments, you may find my article **10 Insider Secrets For Deciding On Which Instrument To Buy** helpful.

You can download it for FREE on my website: www.widemannviolins.com.

I hope this information is useful and will help you in the important task of buying your own instrument.

Tobias Widemann



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OLD vs NEW: Can Modern Violins Be Better Than Old Ones?

It is a commonly held view in the violin world that anything 'old' is superior to anything 'new'. Certainly the masterpieces of makers such as Stradivarius and Guarneri del Gesu speak for themselves in terms of beauty and character. However, owning one of the truly great violins from past makers is a financial impossibility for most players.

Sometimes in a quest to get something 'old', players settle for buying an instrument made by a more obscure old maker, which can be very expensive and often difficult to play.

So, is there an alternative? Is it possible to achieve a quality sound from an instrument by a modern maker, whilst not plunging yourself into financial ruin over something 'old'?

The answer is...

... **YES!**

Many professional musicians are turning to fine modern instruments as their choice. Isaac Stern once said *“If musicians can’t spend at least \$250,000 on a stringed instrument, they’d do better with a fine new one, provided they take the time to test it under battle conditions in a good concert hall.”*

Below are some of the benefits of owning and playing a modern instrument...

1. They are soundly built by makers who follow the patterns of the masters meticulously

Many modern instruments are now of a high standard, due to the wealth of experience and knowledge in the violin-making community. Many makers are perfectionists by nature and good modern instruments are a happy marriage of top-quality materials with excellent workmanship. What’s more, good makers meticulously follow the patterns and measurements of old masterpieces, in an effort to recreate their ‘magic’.

2. They are often more stable than old instruments

Old instruments can be quite susceptible to climate changes, and underneath their polished surface many repaired cracks might be hidden. Modern instruments are well built and stand up to the frequent travel and changes in climate that is the lifestyle of many musicians.

3. You can own your own instrument

Having an instrument on loan brings with it a certain degree of insecurity. At some stage that violin will move from your hands to another player. Owning your own instrument takes away this uncertainty.

4. You can be involved in the process of the building of your violin

You can be involved in the choice of wood for your instrument, the model used, and the overall appearance of the violin. A violin built specially for you is an exciting thing to own, play and feel develop under your hands.

5. You can be involved in shaping the tone of your violin

In the first few years of owning an instrument, you can push the sound of the violin in different directions, and encourage it to vibrate in certain patterns.

6. A well-made instrument will improve over time

If an instrument has been well-built, varnished correctly, and regularly checked for optimum set-up, its sound will open up and improve over time.

7. They are affordable

As nice as it might be to own a Strad, Guarneri or other fine old instrument, it is financially impossible for most people. Buying a good modern instrument can give you a wonderful instrument to play (and be much cheaper to insure too!)

8. Modern violins are built for today’s concert halls

In the large concert halls of today, which can pose acoustic challenges for players, violins need to project well and cut through the orchestra. Some old instruments lack this power and projection, whereas most modern makers make power and projection one of their top priorities in their making.

9. Audiences frequently cannot tell the difference between a modern and an old instrument

There have been many reports, over the years, of enthusiastic concert-goers congratulating the soloist on the wonderful sound of their old Italian instrument, only to discover that in fact the soloist used their contemporary instrument for the concert! Blind sound tests have been conducted, in which modern instruments were on a sound-par with old instruments, including instruments by Stradivarius.

