



## Tips and Tricks

### • Finding the right bow

To determine the right bow for you and your instrument we recommend that you try a selection of at least 3 or 4 bows in your category of interest. Start by alternating two bows and play a short sequence of notes (maximum 10 seconds) on one string. Areas of special interest are often the upper registers on the first string, the 3rd position on the second string and the 1st position on the lowest string. Now you should be able to determine which one sounds more open and free and, very importantly, which one has the quickest and easiest response.

After several rounds of comparisons you will have found the bow that offers the best match with your instrument. Now use that bow for playing a longer piece of music that you know well to see how the bow works overall. If you find two similar good sounding bows try to judge the feel of the bow, especially how easily and well it does off-string bowings for you. If one bow sounds better but another one feels better you should keep in mind that very probably you will get used to the feel but the sound stays the same.

We would also point out that it is very important to have your instrument in very good condition when choosing a bow. The strings should not be old and fatigued. New strings should be played in, which you can determine by the fact that they keep their tuning well.

### • First use

Arcus bows combine low weight with ultimate resiliency in an entirely new way. The result is a somewhat different feel. Most musicians need a few days to adjust to it, in a similar way to getting used to a new instrument.

We have experienced that during the first days some musicians find playing an Arcus bow tiring and believe it has to do with "missing" weight in the bow. As a matter of fact what we see here is a double compensation in movements of the bow: The bow hand

performs corrections (for softer and more heavy bows) as it has been taught to do over a long time, but then has to take them back, because the bow doesn't need these corrections. After playing for more time, we learn to relax the hand more and skip the unnecessary manoeuvres. On the other hand we have also seen musicians with an excellent bowing technique, who, after only short practice used an "Arcus" for a solo performance.

In general we recommend playing with the new bow exclusively for some time, maybe one or two weeks. Going back and forth with the old bow may slow down the learning process significantly. After this period there is absolutely no problem alternating with traditional bows.

### • Technique

For off string bowings we recommend keeping the bow closer to the strings and using a little more movement. This way the strokes become very precise and the tone contains a lot of sound and very little noise.

You may find that spiccato with your Arcus bow is performed closer to the frog than you are used to.

For a strong, robust sound you may play closer to the bridge than with other bows but your tone will neither become rough nor will it break.

### • Tension

The camber of our sticks is significantly shallower than those of wooden bows. In a completely relaxed state you will see a distance of several millimetres between the hair and the stick. To start with tighten the bow in a similar way as with a "normal" bow. Now the hair should have the tension of a relatively soft respectively light wooden bow, so you have optimum control and off string characteristics. Your stick should still not bottom out on the strings when playing loud chords. Try more or less

tension too and see how it works for you. You will find that the bow's feel alters significantly by each half turn of the button, allowing you to find the proper adjustment for a given music and your style.

### • Health and comfort

In times before tennis rackets were made from carbon fibre, "tennis-elbow" used to be a wide spread sports injury. It was caused by the low frequency waves that the wooden frame generated on every hit. With bows we experience very similar effects which seems to affect cello players most often. The spectrum of problems includes pain in the thumb up to the shoulder. The "Arcus" bows do not generate any such low frequency (non musical) resonance. A number of affected musicians got rid of their problems and can now play their instrument for long time without problems.

The low mass of our bows also adds substantially to the playing comfort. In particular orchestra members with long rehearsal days and performances reported on the completely unexpected relief their new bow brings to them.

### • Hair

We put a very regular amount of hair on our bows. This is usually a good compromise of good playing qualities and an optimum sound.

A somewhat thinner hair would enhance the overtones as the hair is under more tension. A thicker hair would make playing more easy and relaxed, and also allows very strong play.

Arcus bows are rehired in the same way as traditional bows. However the hair will normally last significantly longer as it doesn't get ground between the stick and the strings even with heavy playing.