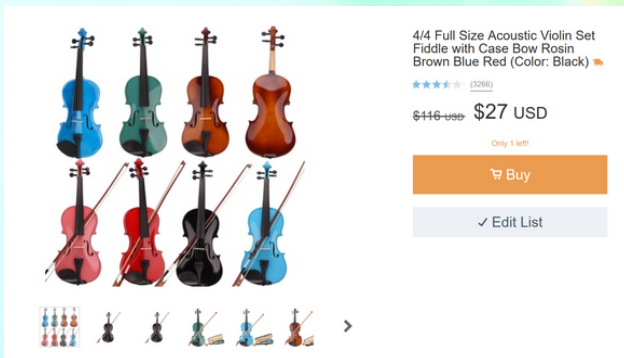


# Instrument Purchase Recommendations

\*\*\*\*\*Read this before buying that \$27.00 Instrument\*\*\*\*\*



*\$27.00 for a violin! That's a...*

great deal, right? I mean, \$27.00 for a violin, any color of the rainbow, comes with a case, a bow AND rosin! Wow!! Oh, it's on sale TODAY ONLY!! I have gotta get that for my child!

**WARNING!!!! I would strongly recommend that you do not do it!!**

Now, I want to be very clear. I am NOT allowed to tell you

what instruments you can or cannot buy. Please do not misinterpret this to be an egotistical orchestra director telling you how to spend your money. However, as a strings musician with over 25 years of experience, I can only make recommendations as to what is a good instrument, and what is a bad instrument. With that said, for the sake of argument, let's say you do buy the \$27.00 beautiful blue instrument. What would happen?

When it arrives, you would send it in to me and your child would ask me to put tapes on it. After the three day process of getting the bridge set (by the way, quality instruments come with the bridge installed), I would then send the instrument home with your child. Your child would not be able to practice when they got home because the instrument would be too much out of tune. Even advanced students who have been tuning themselves for over a year would not be able to tune it. The next day, your child would bring it to me, and I would be able to get it tuned, and we would need to re-tune it about five times during that class. They would rosin the bow and play it, and they would ask "why does it sound like that?" I would ask in response, "sound like what?" so not to hurt their feelings. They would describe what they know to be a poor tone quality. I would explain that this is how their instrument sounds. They will most likely never get used to it, and then the disappointment will set in. I have seen it happen many times. A student on the path to being a lifelong musician doesn't want to disappoint their parents by telling them that the instrument is no good, but they know they will never be successful on their instrument. So, one of two things happens: 1) They ask if they can use my instrument at school and their instrument at home, or 2) They give up, quit, and never play again.

I am a parent to eight kids. I know how it feels for your child to open that one present that will make their holiday season! However, I promise you, this is not it! In the music world, you pay for the quality of instrument you want. A good quality instrument for a middle schooler will cost you at least \$200.00 for a violin, \$300.00 for a viola, and \$600.00 for a cello. High school level instruments are more expensive. A cheaper instrument may be playable (if we are ever able to keep it in tune), but it will never have the tone quality that will enable your child to be successful. It would be better to wait for a year, save up a few hundred dollars, and buy that higher quality instrument next year than it would be to buy a cheap instrument this year.

If you are ready to spend a larger amount of money on an instrument, please see the Music Department Handbook, pages 47-48 (can be downloaded from the Passage Music Website) for a String Instrument Buying Guide. We have also listed reputable instrument retailers on page 43 of the handbook. If you need advice, help, or ideas on what to get, please contact me at anytime. Remember, when buying an instrument for your child, even from a reputable dealer, the cheapest version is a beginner instrument, and will be good only for the first two years. After that, you will want to go up to the next level. If you are looking for an instrument to last your child through high school, please contact me before buying!!

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at anytime! Thank you for taking the time to gain more information about this very important topic!!