



ALEX W GRANT VIOLINS



Seasons Greetings

DIVERTIMENTO

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Wishing you a safe and happy holiday!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year,

from all of us at Alex Grant Violins.



WHAT SIZE CELLO TO PLAY?

Determining the correct size cello is not an exact science - however, there are some guiding factors to consider. Arm length, hand size and hand span will all play a part in determining the right fit.

The chart below shows suitable measurements for each cello size:

Size	Age	Height (cm)	Arm Length *	Finger Span **
1/8	4 to 6	107cm and below	41 - 46cm	5 - 7.5cm
1/4	5 to 7	107 - 122	46 - 51cm	7.5 - 10cm
1/2	7 to 10	122 - 137	51 - 56cm	10 - 12.5cm
3/4	11 to 14	137 - 152	56 - 61cm	12.5 - 15cm
4/4	15 and up	152 and up	61cm and up	15cm and up

* measured from shoulder to base of palm

** measured from tip of index finger to tip of pinkie, with fingers fully stretched apart

Once you have an idea of which size might be appropriate, the following process is a helpful way to determine if that size is a comfortable fit...

Sit on the front of the chair with your knees bent at 90 degree angle, hold the cello and check for the following: (see cello diagram at right)

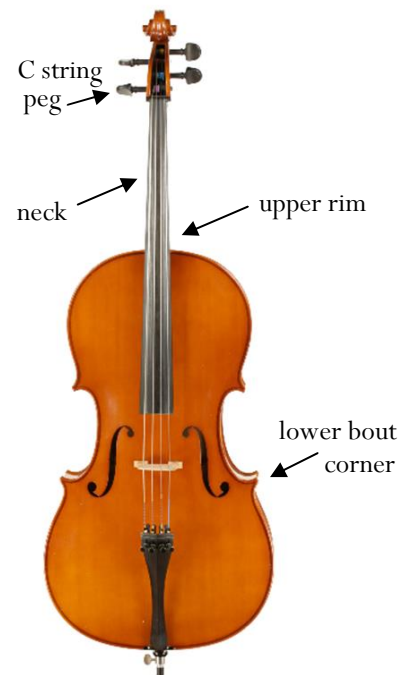
- The back lower bout corner should be touching the left knee. (Adjust the spike so that this is the case)
- The upper rim of the cello should rest on the sternum (breast bone)
- The neck of the cello should be a few centimetres away from the left shoulder
- The C string (thickest string) peg should be just behind the left ear
- The spacing between the notes should be a manageable distance, without the left hand feeling too stretched or too cramped.
- The player's knees should not feel too widely stretched apart

The measurements above are guidelines only - while they give a good indication, it is always recommended that the player actually try out instruments for sizing, and you should be guided by someone experienced at fitting instruments.

Here at Alex Grant Violins, both our stores stock a full range of cellos from 1/8 to full size, and we are very happy to assist and advise in selecting a suitable cello.

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ALEX OUT AND ABOUT...



Visit to the Chi Mei Museum, Tainan, Taiwan

In April this year, as a committee member of the International Society of Violin and Bow Makers (EILA), Alex had the pleasure of accepting an invitation to visit the brand new, still un-opened, Chi Mei Museum in Tainan, Taiwan.

This museum houses one of the largest collection of fine violins, violas, cellos and bows in the world. Along with his EILA colleagues, Alex had two days to explore a breathtaking array of some of the finest instruments ever assembled in one place.

Of particular note was the opportunity to view five instruments by Antonio Stradivari; seeing these all laid out on the table together gives one a rare chance to compare the work of different periods. Similarly, four violins by Giuseppe Guarneri del Gesù, one of which, the 1733, was a perfectly stunning example; this violin embodies practically everything one needs to know about violin making! Maggini and Gaspar da Salo violins from the 17th century side by side ... or violas if you prefer ... your choice!

In addition, the opportunity to view and handle literally hundreds of other famous and obscure works from all corners of the globe made this an unforgettable trip.

ANAM Open Day / Emerald Hill Festival

Alex, and his colleagues in the Australian Violin Maker's Association (AVMA) took part in ANAM's open day on Sunday 9 November - which this year was held in combination with the very lively events of the Emerald Hill Festival. The display of new and old instruments presented by the makers was well received and created a lot of interest amongst those who visited. There were several free concerts throughout the day, given by students and staff of ANAM and dozens of cultural events in the local precinct of Emerald Hill where ANAM is situated.

"Try an Instrument" Session

Musica Viva invited Alex W Grant Violins to present a "Try An Instrument" session at the two recent concerts by Ray Chen and Timothy Young at the Melbourne Recital Centre. Not only were we treated to a stunning recital, we also had a ball with the "Try an Instrument" stand. Everyone was welcome to try an instrument they may never have touched before, with the emphasis on experimenting and having fun.... many people showed a lot of interest and gave the violin, viola or cello a try (in fact, some tried all three!).

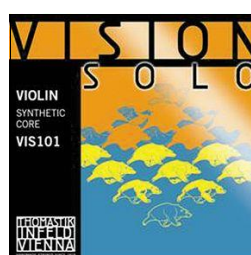
THOMASTIK VIOLIN STRINGS

PETER INFELD: Thomastik says "the new "PI" violin strings have the versatile ability to produce complex tones and, as a result, unparalleled sound colours for the violinist and the audience. The new Peter Infeld violin strings bring the joy of exploring new sound dimensions previously unattainable." This are high-end quality strings, suitable for the professional player - with a rich, powerful sound, they would suit a solo performance situation well. The E string is the first on the market to use platinum winding - this adds a warmth and softness to the tone.

VISION: a bright string with a clear, focused sound and a short break-in time. A good 'general purpose' string, very suitable for students - also available in the full range of fractional sizes.

VISION SOLO: a warmer, more mellow sound than the standard Vision.

VISION TITANIUM SOLO: produces a bright, full sound. May help a violin that sounds weak or dull to come alive.



COMPARING VIOLIN MUTES

Mutes come in a large variety of shapes, weights and materials! Our stores have a full selection available, ranging from light rubber ones suitable for solo or orchestral playing, to very heavy ones for situations when you want almost no sound. Here is an overview of the mutes that we stock - arranged in order of the volume of sound that the mute allows, from loudest to softest.



Polymute: A silicone mute, with quite a light muting effect. Available in red, black and clear (depending on stock)



Tourte mute: Round or violin shape.

The most popular option, this is an inexpensive general-purpose mute, suitable for orchestra or solo playing. It dampens the sound enough, but still allows sufficient sound to hear well and have decent sound quality.



Some players find these mutes can rattle, when on the violin but not in use.

Menuhin shield mute



- **Artist:** This mute is firmer and slightly heavier than the mutes above, and so dampens the sound more.

- **Professional:** This model has a metal weight, which further cuts down the sound.



It produces a very nice tone quality, giving the right balance between muting and changing the sound, but not doing either to a detrimental degree.

Tourte-Bech magnetic mute:



Designed to eliminate the problem of rattling. A small clip fits on the tailpiece, which then holds the mute in place with a magnet when not in use.



Creates a slightly more muted sound than the previous mutes, while still very suitable for solo or orchestral playing.



Practice mutes:

'Ultra' rubber practice mute:

This cuts out a significant amount of sound, so would be unsuitable for solo/orchestral use - but it is the least dampening of the practice mutes and still allows a reasonable tone quality. Good for situations when you don't want to make too much noise, but still want to hear what you're doing!



Ebony wooden mute: Reduces the sound further - in between the rubber practice mute above and the metal mutes below.



Tonwolf clip-on mute:

Heavy-duty practice mute that eliminates a large amount of the sound.



Artino practice mute:

Metal with a rubber coating. Eliminates most of the sound.



Metal practice mute:

Eliminates almost all of the sound.

These metal mutes create a thin, rather 'nasal' and somewhat buzzy sound - but they are fantastic for motel rooms, when others are sleeping, practicing in the same room as others, etc!

TINALLEY STRING QUARTET - HAYDN OP 20, NO. 1, 3, 4

As musicologist Karl Geiringer said, the direction "*affettuoso*" (affectionately, tenderly) marked on two of the slow movements in opus 20, "The Sun" quartets, could be applied to all six quartets. These quartets also show the influence of the "*sturm und drang*" (storm and urge) movement, a reaction against the rational aesthetic constraints imposed by the Enlightenment. Haydn is often called 'the father of the string quartet', and these quartets in particular are defining and influential works in the genre.

In this recording, Tinalley String Quartet presents a remarkable interpretation—it is full of the elegance, buoyancy and depth of these music jewels. More than musical enjoyment, this recording takes the listener on a journey through an outstanding milestone in musical history.

(review by Rafael Grassi)



You can hear Tinalley live, in their final Melbourne performance for the year:

Monday, December 8th, 7pm:
The Salon, Melbourne Recital Centre

Programme: Haydn String Quartet Opus 20, No. 2; Britten Quartet No. 3;
Mendelssohn String Quartet Opus 12

More information? Find the quartet at :

tinalley.com.au



facebook.com/pages/Tinalley-String-Quartet/118734558195348

GL CASES



These stylish cases have a distinctive, modern design, and are made with attention to detail and quality materials which are sturdy and protective.

The **GL Combi case** (*right*) is oblong, and features room for four bows and a string-holder, an internal pouch for accessories, plush interior with leather details, backpack straps, side and subway handles, and a combination lock and water-resistant zip. It comes with a large removable pocket on the front for music, as well as mesh netting which can be used instead of the pocket. There is also a smaller removable pocket which can be attached to the back of the case.

The shaped **GL contoured case** (*left*) is light-weight and sleek-looking. It has room for two bows, a small internal pocket for accessories and a compartment for shoulder rest, plush interior with leather details, backpack straps, side and subway handles, and water-resistant zip.

- Both are a dark metallic grey colour, with black interior.



GL leather cases are now in stock!

Lovely genuine Italian leather exterior (brown) with reinforced corners, side and top handles, shoulder strap included. Brown plush interior with carefully finished leather trim and detailing, space for 4 bows, and a hygrometer (humidity gauge).

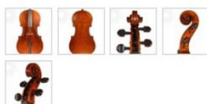


George Withers & Sons, London,
1910

This versatile cello has a wide range of tone colour and is responsive all round.

Please contact us for more details.

More Views



Details

George Thomas Henry Withers, of that illustrious London violin making family, set up his own establishment around 1878, moving to the Leicester Square address, the home of this cello, in 1891. George's two sons trained in Mirecourt, France and that French flavour is obvious in this stunning instrument.

The cello has recently been restored at Alex W Grant Violins.

The sound is clear, powerful and resonant. It exhibits a wide range of tone colour; it is warm, delicate and responsive all round making it very versatile. Our reviewer stated that it was "enjoyable to play, very cool and everything you could possibly want in a cello!!" ... say no more!

UPDATING....

The updating of our site is progressing and, after months of hard work, the new format instrument pages are starting to appear in a steady trickle on our web site so have a look and see what catches your eye!

We ask for your understanding during this period – once it's all finished we hope the new web site will be the place where you can find out even more about Alex Grant Violins and the services we offer, the products we stock and how we can help you.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or queries you would like us to address in future newsletters.

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