
NEWS FOR CELLISTS AUTUMN 2009

Review of Cello Strings

During the four years since our last strings reviews there have been some exciting new innovations by string manufacturers which we have tested with the kind help of cellist friends. We also continue to explore the potential of existing cello strings every time a cellist comes for a string trial. Each trial gives us a deeper insight into the tonal potential of both new and established cello strings, so we have decided to review not only the latest new releases, but also several more established strings which were not described in detail in our last reviews (see www.aitchisoncellos.com/articles).



Strings reviewed on page two include: D'Addario *Kaplan Solutions*, Pirastro *Passione* and *Rostanvo A & D*. On page three you will find a table of selected cello strings giving details of their windings, core materials and string tensions. Please note: when calculating string tensions, Pirastro uses a vibrating length of 690mm whilst all other manufacturers use a vibrating length of 700mm, which amounts to a 1.5% difference. To adjust Pirastro's data, you might like to multiply their tensions by 1.015.

Andrea rosin update

In response to demand from orchestral players, the producers of Andrea rosin have decided to re-issue their **Orchestra** cello rosin (previously 'Toscanini' or 'Symphony') alongside their **Solo** grade rosin. The texture of Orchestra rosin is grittier than the smoother Solo. Cakes are now 4cm in diameter; see below for pricing.

Case Questionnaire

Thank you to everyone who so generously responded to our questionnaire about cello case design. We have been sending participants a set of postcards as a small thank you, but unfortunately we have not been able to send postcards to everyone as some respondents did not mention their name on the form. So if you have already responded but haven't yet received your set of postcards, please do contact us and we'll be delighted to pop the cards into the post to you.

If you have not yet responded and can spare a couple of minutes to complete and return the questionnaire we'd be most grateful. Please visit www.aitchisoncellos.com/casesurvey.htm and send your comments via email to save postage costs. We are now starting to collate the results and will publish a report in the January newsletter.

Cello Specialities

The following cello comforts are all in stock:

Silicone tube bow grip:	£1.25 per inch
New Harmony Wolf Eliminators:	£15 each
Tartini Solo and Orchestra rosins	£25 per cake
Salchow rosin:	£10 per cake
Cellino spike holder	£15

Please email sarah@aitchisoncellos.com or call 01353 668559 if you'd like to order any of the above.

Post and packaging cost approximately £1.50.

CELLO STRING REVIEW

NEW RELEASES: Following their success with *Passione* violin and viola strings, Pirastro released **Passione Cello G & C** strings in 2008. Like the violin and viola strings, the cello G & C have a natural gut core with a patented synthetic woven sleeve which protects the gut core from humidity changes, thus improving the pitch stability and longevity of the string without losing the tonal qualities of gut. *Passione* cello C is wound with tungsten which helps to increase the clarity of sound. These strings have a higher tension than Eudoxas and so feel more rigid under the left hand and the response under the bow also differs from Eudoxa. **Passione A & D** strings have just been released this autumn and are proving very popular. Three out of the five cellists who tested them for us are now using them on their instruments. These strings have a distinctively clear, fresh sound, a smooth texture and a colourful tonal core. Cellists also report that these strings have a quick, clean response and are easily tuned.

D'Addario has also been hard at work extending their Kaplan Solutions set. **Kaplan Solutions A & D** were new on the scene when we wrote our last review and they have proved to be excellent strings with great power, tonal depth and clarity, with more texture than Larsen Standard strings. This autumn D'Addario has just released the **Kaplan Solutions G & C** to complete the range and the early feedback has so far been excellent. These strings have a good, rich sound quality and are quick to respond; the G is noticeably smoother and less metallic sounding than a Spirocore G. 'Easy to play, quick response to short bow strokes, C string is not aggressive but the G is a bit over-focussed higher up the string,' says one cellist.

Rostanvo is a totally new string brand. The first string to be released was the tungsten D which is very powerful and bright, with a distinctive textural edge to the sound. A heavy tension A string has also just been released. No detailed data is yet available but the strings are proving popular in France and can be ordered online from www.rostanvo.com

ESTABLISHED STRINGS: Pirastro **Obligato** strings have a multi-strand synthetic core with metal windings (except for the metal core A) and they fall into the same category as Dominant, Aricore and Synoxa. **Obligato** strings are not especially new (launched in 2000) but what makes them distinctive is that **Obligato G & C** strings incorporate tungsten in the windings and reach pitch at a similar tension to other modern metal strings (see table opposite). These strings have a

warm, rich and complex sound and we have experienced a recent surge of interest in the G & C strings from professional players who are still seeking the qualities of covered gut bottom strings without the hassle.

Evah Pirazzi Soloist: Evah Pirazzi (EP) cello strings were launched back in 2004, followed by EP Soloist A & D in 2005. Since then, Pirastro have released EP G & C Soloists and the whole EP Soloist set has since become very popular amongst cellists. EP Soloist strings are powerful with a lot of resonance which can be quite overwhelming until the strings are played in. Some players change EP Soloists one at a time in order to stay grounded, but consider it a small price to pay. The bottom strings are more focussed first cousins to the tungsten Spirocore bottom strings, while the top strings strike a pleasing balance of focus, textured sound and projection, with a feeling of freedom under the bow. What is most unusual about EP Soloists is that these strings really do constitute a coherent set; devotees like to use all four EP Soloists on their instruments.

TUNGSTEN G STRING SYNDROME The more experience we have with cello strings, the clearer it becomes that cello G strings can be a real nuisance, particularly those with tungsten windings. A fresh tungsten G string is often fitted in an act of faith that its aggressive tone will eventually mellow and match the C string. The most extreme example of this syndrome is the tungsten Spirocore G but to some extent this is also true of Helicore, Permanent, Obligato and Evah Pirazzi G strings. We understand from our conversations with string developers that traditionally they like to keep the thickness of the G string down, which in turn leads to a very high proportion of tungsten in the winding which is responsible for the aggressive, nasal sound of these strings before they are played in. Some players have rejected tungsten bottom strings altogether as a result; others value the clarity of the tungsten Spirocore C string so much that they are willing to combine a non-tungsten G with a tungsten C. We have seen Larsen Soloist, Spirocore Silver, Permanent Soloist, Belcanto and even Aricore fitted alongside tungsten Spirocore C strings. Recent feedback about the new Kaplan Solutions G suggests that D'Addario have been working successfully to overcome this problem and we hear that Larsen have just released a new Wire core G which also addresses this issue. We now await new metal core bottom strings for the *Passione* cello set, so let's hope that some progress will be made in this quest for the ideal cello G string.

SELECTED CELLO STRINGS 1922 - 2009

Please note that Pirastro strings are measured using a vibrating length of 690mm and 440 Hz, while all other strings are measured using a vibrating length of 700mm and 440 Hz: a 1.5% difference. To convert Pirastro tensions, multiply by 1.015.

STRING NAME AND DATE	STRING	MEDIUM TENSION (LBS)	WINDINGS *	CORE MATERIALS
Pirastro Eudoxa 1922	G	28.6	Silver	Natural gut
	C	26.8		
Thomastik-Infeld Spirocore 1949	G	30.8	Tungsten ✕	Steel rope
	C	29.7	Tungsten ✕	
Jargar 1956	A	37.4	Alloys	Solid steel filament
	D	31.7		
Thomastik-Infeld Dominant 1970	A	30.8	Chrome	Multi-strand nylon
	D	24.9	Chrome	
	G	22.9	Chrome #	
	C	22.5	Chrome #	
Larsen Strings Standard 1991	A	39.3	SF/ Iron alloy	Solid steel
	D	29.7	Al/Iron alloy	
	G	27.6	Tungsten	
	C	30.1	Tungsten	
Larsen Strings Soloist 1993	A	40.7	SF/Iron alloy	Solid steel
	D	29.7	Al/Iron alloy	
	G	32.2	Tungsten	
D'Addario Helicore 1994	G	29.4	T & S	Steel rope
	C	28.8	T & S	
Pirastro Permanent 1996	A	37.1	Chromesteel	Solid steel
	D	31.4	Chromesteel	Solid steel
	G	30.1	Tungsten	Steel rope
	C	29.4	Tungsten	Steel rope
Pirastro Permanent Soloist 1996/7	A	36.7	Chromesteel	Solid steel
	D	31.0	Chromesteel	Solid steel
	G	29.2	Tungsten	Steel rope
	C	28.1	Tungsten	Steel rope
Pirastro Obligato 2000	A	36.9	Chromesteel	Solid steel
	D	29.9	Chromesteel	Multi-strand synthetic
	G	30.8	Tungsten	Multi-strand synthetic
	C	28.1	Tungsten	Multi-strand synthetic
Pirastro Evah Pirazzi 2004	A	38.9	Chromesteel	Solid steel
	D	30.8	Chromesteel	Solid steel
	G	27.7	Tungsten	Steel rope
	C	28.1	Tungsten	Steel rope
Larsen Strings Wire core 2004	G	30.3	Tungsten	Steel wire rope
	C	29.6	Tungsten	
Pirastro Evah Pirazzi Soloist 2005	A	38.9	Chromesteel	Solid steel
	D	28.6	Chromesteel	Solid steel
	G	28.1	Tungsten	Steel rope
	C	29.2	Tungsten	Steel rope
D'Addario Kaplan Solutions 2005	A	39.0	Titanium	Solid steel core
	D	31.0	Nickel	
Pirastro Passione 2008/2009	A	39.1	Chromesteel	Solid steel
	D	29.2	Chromesteel	Solid steel
	G	26.8	Chromesteel	Natural gut
	C	27.7	Tungsten	Natural gut
D'Addario Kaplan Solutions 2009	G	30.9	Tungsten	Stranded steel
	C	30.0	Tungsten	Stranded steel

* C = Chrome, S = Silver, T =Tungsten, SF = Synthetic Fibre, Al = Aluminium

Also available in silver, but string tension shown is for chrome

✕ Also available in chrome and silver, but string tension shown is for tungsten

SELECTED CELLOS AND BOWS

JAMES & HENRY BANKS CELLO 1802

L.O.B: 28¾" (730mm) String length: 26¾" (680mm)
Price: £45,000

This important instrument is in very pure condition with crackled dark brown varnish and a rich, rewarding tonal response.

MARIO MACCAFERRI CELLO 1929

L.O.B: 30" (761mm) String length: 27½" (699mm)
Price: £27,000

This cello is a rare example of Maccaferri's work and is in excellent condition, with a dark, compelling tone and fine varnish.

WOLFGANG SCHNABL CELLO 1999

L.O.B: 30" (760mm) String length: 27⅛" (690mm)
Price: £18,500

An immaculate instrument by this sought-after maker, based on the 'Cristiani' Stradivari model.

SIMON ANDREW FORSTER CELLO c.1840

L.O.B: 29⅛" (738mm) String length: 26¾" (680mm)
Price: £18,000

A beautiful instrument with characteristically rich red-brown varnish and a fine, colourful tone. Inscribed 'Forster No. 7' on lower rib.

ARISTIDE CAVALLI CELLO c.1910

L.O.B: 29" (738mm) String length: 26⅞" (682mm)
Price: £16,000

This late Cremonese cello is an example of the maker's more superior work, with elegant arching and a refined sound.

ROBIN AITCHISON CELLO 2009

L.O B: 30" (758mm) String length: 27½" (695mm)
Price: £16,000

A close copy of a celebrated 1720's Stradivarius cello, this instrument has a pleasing tonal depth and an even, balanced response.

FRENCH CELLO c.1790

L.O.B: 29⅛" (740mm) String length: 27¼" (695mm)
Price: £15,000

The beautiful tonal quality of this cello reflects its origins, age and the quality of restoration over the years. The back is later, probably by W E Hill & Sons.

GEORGE CORSBY CELLO c.1810

L.O.B: 29¼" (742mm) String length: 26¾" (687mm)
Price: £15,000

A beautiful English cello in good condition with a crisp, colourful tone.

GERMAN CELLO c.1840

L.O.B: 29⅛" (741mm) String length: 27¼" (691mm)
Price: £14,000

A most appealing and responsive cello in good condition with rich golden brown varnish.

MARC LABERTE CELLO 1924

L.O.B: 30" (764mm) String length: 27¼" (693mm)
Price: £14,000

This handsome cello has a powerful, open tone, and is in very good condition.

TYROLEAN CELLO c.1780

L.O B: 29¼" (745mm) String length: 27⅞" (690mm)
Price: £12,000

A very engaging instrument with a lively, richly textured tone and beautiful 18th century varnish.

LAURENT BOURLIER CELLO c.1840

L.O.B: 29" (738mm) String length: 26⅞" (682mm)
Price: £12,000

This attractive Mirecourt cello has a fine, rich and even tone and a quick response.

MIRECOURT CELLO c.1890

L.O.B: 30⅞" (760mm) String length: 27¼" (691mm)
Price: £6,500

ADOLFE DURENZY CELLO c.1880

L.O.B: 30¼" (762mm) String length 27" (690mm)
Price: £5,500

SELECTED CELLO BOWS

William Salchow	80.2g	£3,520
E Ouchard	77g	£3,500
Fine bow c.1900	81.5g	£3,500
Roger Zabinski	77.8g	£3,000
Christian Wanka	81.3g	£3,100
Paul Sadka	78.8g	£2,920
Mike Maurushat	78.9g	£2,760
Klaus Grünke	81g	£2,650
W E Hill & Sons	74g	£2,500
Bernd Etzler	82g	£2,500
John Aniano	81.9g	£2,320
W E Hill & Sons	82.1g	£2,200
Christian Wanka	80g	£1,950
Ronaldo Sequeira	81.3g	£950
Lawrence Cocker	77.8g	£900
German c.1920	78g	£900
F R Leblanc	82.3g	£800
Penzel	80.5g	£700
Emil Werner	83.9g	£600