

9 Wornout strings Some unraveling of gut strings can be checked if you singe with a match. Red gut is good for damp weather. Wound strings with loose windings should be replaced. Some advise a little olive oil occasionally on a gut string to prolong its life. Metal strings donot contact the bridge grooves directly but ride onleather or rubber rings or specially designed string carriers. This softens the metallic sound and incidentally prolongs the life of the string.

10. A Faulty Instrument. The tone is too tight and stuffy in this all too frequently appearing instrument. This unresponsiveness is sometimes found in plywood basses. Plenty of bow playing will help. Basses of traditional construction may have left the manufacturer improperly graduated. (Too much wood-too thick a top). Correcting such a condition is a big job and may cost more than the bass is worth. Check the soundpost first.

11. Improperly placed soundpost. Two inches below the left leg is a general rule. Experiments should be made to find the best spot. Once that spot is found, always keep pressure on the strings when changing bridges so that the post will not fall and need resetting.

12. Poor Rosin Poor rosin, especially of the grong glass mixed with glue or violin rosin will do much to discourage the young bass o player. Change rosin with the season using the softer variety in winter.

13. An Unstandard instrument No other instrument comes in as many varieties as the bass. The three quarter size is in general use and the 7/8 size is common. Young grade school players now have the half size bass. The fullsize bass is rare outside of symphonies. A five string bass using the low C must have such a thick neck as to be rather impractical. The key extension used to lower the low E string to pedal C costs at least \$100.00 to install. It may be practical for a college but hardly for a high school. It is almost impossible to play on the necks of certain basses and land anywhere correct position. The saddle tends to fall away from the left thumb on others. Avoid purchasing such a bass for your school. MENC publishes a list of standard measurements. Use them as a guide.

\* \* \* \* \* RECOMMENDATIONS \* \* \* \* \*

Good rosins: Petz: made in Austria comes in 5 grades of hardness  
OAK: Made in Detroit Michigan  
There are possibly other very fine brands on the market

Strings: Gut strings are recommended for the average school player. Always use gut for dance work. Metal strings are for advanced players. Not advised for plywood basses.

Advantages of metal strings: Clearness of tone, good intonation is easier to achieve. Disadvantages: A shrill instrument will give a twang-ness to the tone. Finger tension is increased.

Advantages of gut strings: More sonorous but more muddy tone. Best for pizzacato. Less finger tension. Note: strings should never be loosened between playing sessions.

Recommended metal strings: THOMASTIK Vienna Austria Chrome Steel  
LEWIS Chicago  
Black Diamond Aluminum Alloy (stains fingers)

TEACHING MATERIAL

The Simandl method Volume I pub. Carl Fischer is an ideal basic method for the serious student. The fingering system (first, second, and fourth only are used until the 6th position) is very logical and clearly presented.

Advanced studies: 86 Etudes for string bass Hrabec -Simandl pub. C.F.  
Newest System of scale studies by Dmitry Shmuklovsky. The arpeggio work uses all possible alternate positions and really sets up the left hand. C.F.

57 Studies Storck \*Hrabec Edited by Fred Zimmermann International Music Co.  
Classical Duets for two Basses " " " " N.Y.