Caring for your Orchestral Stringed Instrument

Wooden stringed instruments are fragile. Taking proper care of your instrument is a must in order to ensure years of enjoyable play. Here are a few easy steps to keep your instrument in its best playing condition at all times.

1. **ALWAYS keep your instrument in its case or on an instrument stand.**
   - Cases keep instruments safe from accidents and environmental changes.
   - Avoid extreme and rapid temperature changes.
   - During the winter months, be sure to use a humidifier and store the instrument in its case to maintain a safe humidity level.
   - **An easy rule-of-thumb:** Keep your instrument in the same temperature and humidity level you would be comfortable in (between 70°F and 80°F and 45% to 55% relative humidity is ideal).

2. **ALWAYS remember to wipe down your instrument after playing.**
   - Use a soft, cotton cloth to remove excess rosin from the strings and instrument.
   - Use a quality rosin to prevent excess buildup and damage to your bow or instrument.

3. **Take proper care of your bow.**
   - The bow is very delicate, so be careful not to drop or bang it against anything.
   - Keep the bow away from extreme temperatures.
   - Always loosen the hair when you are not using the bow, otherwise the bow can warp and the hair will overstretch.
   - Do not touch the bow hair itself.

4. **Keep an eye on the bridge.**
   - As you tune the instrument, the strings tend to pull the top of the bridge toward the fingerboard.
   - The bridge should be seated firmly to the top of the instrument and the feet (bottom of the bridge) should touch the top uniformly.
   - If the bridge falls or breaks, or if the soundpost falls, be sure to loosen the strings and have the bridge or soundpost reset or replaced by our repair shop.

5. **Keep an eye on the tuning pegs.**
   - The pegs at the top are pressure-fit into the holes of the peg box.
   - The function of the pegs can be affected by wear and seasonal changes.
   - If the pegs are not holding or are difficult to turn, have the pegs adjusted or replaced by our repair shop.

6. **Know when to change your strings.**
   - If your strings start to fray, unwind, or become difficult to keep in tune, it is time to replace your strings.