

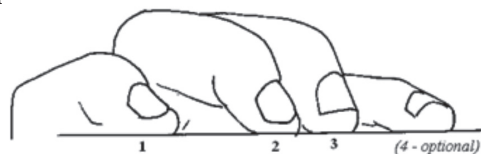
### Basic Playing Instructions

When you are comfortable holding both the bow and the rebec, you can begin to put them

together. Practice playing the open strings first. Lay the rosined bow gently on the

string. Push down very slightly, with the first finger of your right hand, as you pull the bow back and forth across the strings. Practice will help you find the right combination of pressure and speed to make your rebec sound its best. Remember to keep both arms and shoulders relaxed while you play.

Playing notes on the rebec is very similar to playing the violin. Remember that the neck of the instrument will lie along your palm and hand, so the arch of your fingers is much flatter than with the violin. With your first finger of your left hand, reach around the neck of the instrument to push down on the lowest (thickest) string, about 1 inch below the nut. To find the right place, listen for the difference in pitch between the open string and the noted string. The difference should be a whole step. Reach around with the second and third fingers, as shown in the guide above, to find the other notes. The fourth finger is commonly used in violin, but is rarely used on the rebec. When you are comfortable finding the notes on the lowest (thickest) string, try reaching for them on the middle string, and then the highest (thinnest) string. You may find that you will need to pull the left elbow closer to your body in order to reach the notes on the lowest string.



### Instrument Care

- Avoid extremes of temperature and humidity.
- Never handle the hair of the bow with your hands. Oils from your skin will be absorbed by the bow hairs and leave permanent slick spots on the hair.
- Trim off broken or stray bow hairs, do not pull them out.
- Wipe the rosin dust off the face of the rebec with a soft cloth every time you finish playing.
- Do not use wood furniture cleaner or polishes on your rebec and avoid solvents such as alcohol or acetone.
- Store your instrument and bow in its case, even inside your home.

### Accessories

Accessories are available at [www.ensoulmusic.com](http://www.ensoulmusic.com)



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Rebec



**REBEC**

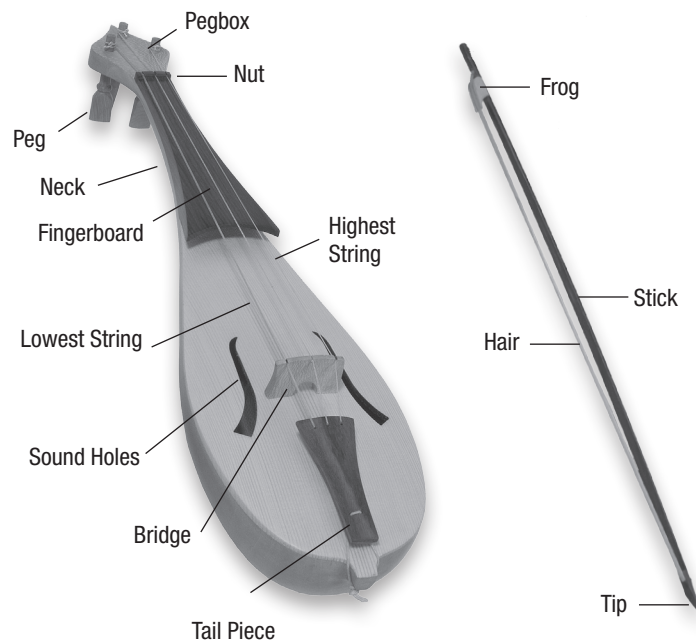
– OWNER'S GUIDE –

## Before You Play

**R**ebecs are de-tuned and the bridge is removed prior to shipment to reduce the chance of damage to the instrument. Before you can play, you will need to set the bridge in place, tune the instrument, and prepare the bow.

Begin by setting the bridge in place. Gently take nearly all the tension off the three strings. The bridge should sit flat on its feet, parallel to the nut and at right angles to the strings. It should be centered in the area between the two f-shaped sound holes. The length of bridge to nut should be 12.75 inches. Slowly turn the pegs, one string at a time, until there is enough tension to hold the bridge in place.

Continually check to make sure that the bridge is standing fully upright; increasing tension on the strings may pull it forward. If required, gently push it back into the fully vertical position.



You will need to prepare the bow before beginning to play. In order to grab the strings it will need to be coated with rosin. Scrape the surface of the new cake of rosin with a key or a knife until it is rough. Using short, back and forth strokes, rub the rosin over the bow hair, working your way from the frog to the tip. When the hair begins to get a coating of rosin on it, use longer strokes to evenly distribute the rosin on the hair. The hair will have enough rosin when it begins to look dull white instead of shiny.

## Tuning

**U**se a piano or electronic tuner as a reference. As you tune the instrument, continue to check the bridge to make sure it is not tipping forward and push it back to vertical as needed. Begin with the lowest string and slowly turn the peg to increase tension while gently plucking the string to hear the resulting pitch. Bring it slowly into tune. Bringing a gut string into tune too quickly increases the likelihood of breaking the string. Tune the highest string next, then the middle string. This allows the tension to be put on the instrument evenly. Gently push down on the tuning peg as you tune the strings. The pegs are tapered and will hold better if you press in slightly while turning.

This instrument will require frequent tunings. The strings are made of natural gut, and will stretch as they adjust to being under tension. The instrument itself will also need time to adjust to being under tension. Regular tuning for several months will help the rebec develop its voice and become more stable. Sound should be high pitched and sharp.

### From lowest string to highest:

Alto Rebecs (medium): G below middle C, D above middle C, A above middle C

*\*The Alto Rebec is the most common size with the most common tuning.*

## Holding The Instrument

It is easiest for beginners to learn to hold the rebec and the bow separately. Practice holding each part, until you are comfortable with them before trying to play the rebec with the bow.

Hold the bow similar to a violin bow. With your left hand, pick up the bow near the middle of the stick with the frog toward your right hand. Be careful not to touch the hair. Raise your right arm to about shoulder height and let your wrist and fingers go limp. You'll see that your fingers have a slight curve to them. Keeping your hand and wrist in that position, put your fingertips on the top of the bow above the frog. Then lower your arm so that your wrist becomes horizontal – your fingers should form arches above the bow. Your fingers rest on top of the bow where they can exert downward pressure as you draw the bow over the strings. Reach forward and up with your thumb until the edge of your thumb supports the frog from underneath. Unlike the modern violin grip, your thumb sits underneath the frog, not between the stick and the hair. You should be able to support the bow entirely with your right hand now. You may need to slide your fingertips very slightly off the top of the bow towards the side away from your body for a more stable grip. The little finger should rest lightly on the top of the stick, and your thumb should be bent, not straight. This grip will take some practice to become comfortable.

The rebec is played similarly to the violin, but with a few differences. Medieval instruments are not held between the shoulder and the chin like the violin, but instead are played “on the arm.” Hold the rebec horizontally in front of your left armpit. Cradle the neck of the rebec in your left hand, with the neck lying between your thumb and your first finger. Your palm will be almost horizontal, with the neck of the rebec lying across it. Practice holding it in this position, until you are comfortable.