

## Music Instrument Making: Strings (600 to 1450)

Also later instruments carved from the solid such as the Mary Rose fyddles 1536.

**Category Rules:** The category is for string instruments that are fashioned out of wood, metal or a combination of materials. It is suggested that the documentation identify the period model for the entry as well as any deviations from the period model and reasons for the deviations. Since there are, almost, no primary sources (the actual instruments) it is acknowledged that illumination and other works of art are the primary working sources for these instruments (exceptions being the Warwick Castile Gittern, several Rotta from the 7th - 9th centuries, and the Trinity College 14th century Irish harp.)

### Documentation (0 to 4 points):

- 0: No documentation provided with entry.
- 1: Minimal information consisting of time, place and style.
- 2: Information consisting of time, place, and style, plus use of general sources; reliance on tertiary sources with perhaps one secondary source (ex: use of encyclopedia articles with a possible additional use of a book or article that refers to a period source.).
- 3: Information consisting of time, place, and style, plus a developed discussion making use of critical references; sources are largely secondary (ex: sources refer to period references; documentation discusses, compares, and contrasts the source's views).
- 4: Information consisting of time, place, and style, plus explanation of original research/experiment and relation of source material to it. Primary sources along with critical references, if available, are emphasized (ex: sources used are from the appropriate period for the entry, such as period manuscripts, paintings or artifacts, archaeological essays of primary source item, etc.).

### Methods and Materials (0 to 4 points):

Materials – are they the types used in the target period –

Unless an instrument is of larger size – (lute, organistrum, – something larger than 3 inches in depth and 10 inches at the bouts) it will be carved from the solid block of wood, not glued pieces bent to a form.

Method is defined here as carving from the solid (we are not talking tools) – this process must end with hand tools to finish the inside of the instrument and a discussion of that is expected in the documentation. Middle Eastern luthier techniques, as opposed to western modern luthier techniques are what judges should be looking for here.

- 0: Entry is completely modern with no relationship to period elements or practices.
- 1: Use of modern materials and methods to produce a work that would not be accepted in period but either bears some relationship to an authentic work or which might be useful within SCA Culture.
- 2: Use of both modern materials and methods to produce a work that looks or feels authentic to the time period it purports to be.
- 3: Use of either modern materials or methods to produce a work that looks or feels authentic.
- 4: Use of totally authentic materials and methods.

**Scope (0 to 6 points):** Rank the ambition, not the success, of the entry on a scale of 0 to 6 for each of the following elements and average for the total Scope score (Total of element scores divided by 6).

- Number of strings and the amount of tension the instrument has to bear. (More strings does not mean more difficult – kg or lb pressure on a thin fyddle top (with only 3 strings) is as difficult as 38 on a psaltery or harp. The judge is looking for stress and balance.
- Number of components. Body, top, inlays & overlays, carving (includes the body and neck and pegbox as well as any other carving such as figure heads), bridge, tailpiece,

endpin, pegs, strings, fingerboard, rose, nut, neck, pegbox, -- just to name the main ones.

- Wood grain – quarter sawn top wood
- Molds and jigs made to form instrument. – only used in larger instruments such as lutes – otherwise N/A with instruments carved from the solid.
- Degree of decoration. Piercing of tailpiece, inlays, overlays, carved heads, painting – for example.
- Extent gone to ensure authenticity of patterns, techniques and materials used.

**Skill (0 to 6 points):** How well is the entry made? Rank the success of the entry on a scale of 0 to 6 points for each of the following elements and average for the total Skill score (Total of element scores divided by 8).

- Varnish or other finish.
- Joinery. These are luthier joints, not furniture
- Lack of distortion under string tension. Included bracing.
- Crispness of carved decoration.
- Playing ease on: This is a period instrument and should meet those standards, not modern instrument standards. Example, a fretted instrument plays like a lute, not a modern guitar – the tension is light, the frets shallow.
- Necked instruments: string spacing and action on fingerboard.
- Open string instruments: string spacing.
- Sound – the tonal quality of the instrument – was the sound box “master tolerated” – apply tap tone and sustained resonance tests as well as listening to the instrument played. Listen for clear tones in all registers and for good balance.

**Creativity (0 to 4 points):**

Decoration consists of period design and decorative elements – these elements include: rose, marquetry, carving (raised and sunken), inlays, overlays, piercing, painting, and in some cases casting of bronze or other metal parts as well as worked bone and horn components. These elements are commonly found on the body, neck, tail piece, finger board, peg box, pegs, bridge, end pin, nut, table, and other less common component too numerous to name. (Note, decorative woods are not a consideration)

0: No decoration or carving.

1: Minor decoration or carving.

2: Some decoration. (Very minimal, no carving)

3: Use of a rose or other carving, marquetry, or other decoration as listed above.

4: Major carved decoration, marquetry inlay and overlay, or other decorative components.

**Judge's Observations (0 to 6 points):** Rank the entry as a whole. How well do all the separately judged parts fit together? The entry's overall effect is judged in this section. This is the only section of the Criteria where the judge may allow her/his personality, private opinions and personal preferences to influence scoring.

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