instrument to an amplifier; a good basic length is 15-20 feet. If you are using more pedals, you may want to buy a few shorter ones (patch cables) to connect them together into one complete circuit.

## Expert Advice

We stock electric instruments, amplifiers and accessories in a variety of styles and price ranges. I work full time at the shop and am always more than happy to offer my own personal advice as well for immediate assistance.
Do you have any more questions about electrics? If we can't answer it on the spot, we have colleagues and friends who are experts in the field, including Ken Dattmore of Yamaha Orchestral Strings, Sam Finlay of David Gage String Instruments (makers of the Realist Violin), John Jordan (maker of the Jordan Violin) Resolution 15 electric violinist Earl Maneein, and Rock Violin Innovator Mark Wood.

## In Conclusion

If you would like to experiment with different styles of music and play in a rock or jazz band, I would highly recommend investing in an electric violin or a pickup. You will discover many new sounds and have the opportunity to play different musical genres than you do at the moment. Your acoustic instrument will always be there to play as well. I play both acoustically and electrically and see no reason why the two cannot coexist.

And now, a word from our attorney: Under no circumstances whatsoever shall Charles J. Rufino Violin Maker LLC or any $\mathrm{d} / \mathrm{b} / \mathrm{a} /$ or subsidiary be liable for any indirect, consequential, or punitive damages arising from following the advice or suggestions contained in this document. In the event of any damage to any person or entity due to reliance on the advice or information in this document, the maximum liability to Charles J. Rufino Violin Maker LLC or any subsidiary to the shall not exceed the consideration paid for this information.

## About Charles J. Rufino

Master Violin Maker Charles J. Rufino studied violin making and restoration for ten years in some of the finest studios of Europe and the United States. Since 1983 from his own studios in Huntington, Long Island and New York he has made instruments considered by experts to be the equal of old Masters. Today, Rufino instruments are used by discerning musicians and heard live and in recordings
of concerts and television, movie and Broadway soundtracks.

He established The Long Island Violin Shop to share his expertise with string teachers and their students. The LIVS specializes in excellent affordable instruments and expert services for serious young string players. Mr. Rufino is a member of The American Federation of Violin and Bow Makers, L’Entente Internationale des Maitres Luthiers et Archetiers d'Art, and the String Industry Council of the American String Teachers Association (ASTA) He is a well known spokesman for his art, and presents an illustrated PowerPoint lecture The Art and Lore of the Violin numerous times each year to student and professional groups.


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Charles J. Rufino Violin Maker LLC 8 Elm Street, Huntington, NY 11743-3402 631-427-3569 music@liviolinshop.com
www.liviolinshop.com

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## GETTING StARTED

## With Electric

## INSTRUMENTS

A Guide for Classical Players

By
David Wong

The Long Island Violin Shop
8 Elm Street, Huntington NY 11743
631-427-3569 www.LIvIOLINSHOP.COM
DAVID@LIVIOLINSHOP.COM

## Background Information

The violin is an instrument with an illustrious past, still played today as it has been for centuries. However, technology now allows you to amplify your instrument and play in wonderfully new ways.

Electric violins, while being louder than standard violins, also create opportunities to produce new sounds. They let you explore different musical possibilities, offering something completely new for a musician who is used to playing the music of Mozart and Beethoven.

Students enjoy playing music with their friends, and teachers will find that rather than losing students, electrified strings helps retain them, allowing more opportunities for music they are used to hearing on the radio! If you are a professional musician, electrics offer opportunities for new gigs as well. Electric violins can also be played through headphones, for silent practice.

Playing an electric instrument doesn't mean that you must "switch over." Instead you may experiment with both styles, discovering a new set of skills with which you can explore many different kinds of music!

## Electric Violins

Solid Body instruments usually have built-in electronics and produce almost no sound without amplification, like electric guitars.

Electro-Acoustic instruments are standard acoustic instruments with built-in electronics.

Amplified Acoustics are acoustics with an added pickup.

Just like acoustic instruments, the quality of the electric instrument increases as the price goes up.

An inexpensive electric violin is a great place to start but, as you find yourself wanting more, you will probably want to upgrade just as you would your acoustic instrument.

Many electric "violins" have extra low strings, especially useful for playing power chords or bass lines in rock music.

## Pickups- Pros and Cons

Pickups are the easiest way to begin amplifying your instrument and they have their pros and cons.

Pro- You can start playing with a pickup on your acoustic instrument for $\$ 200$ or less.
Pro- You can play acoustic and then change over.
Pro- You can attach and detach the pickup easily without modifying your instrument
Con- They have tonal limitations compared to full electrics.
Con- They can cause feedback problems
Con- Installation may be inconvenient as some pickups are semi-permanent

## Amplifiers

Many types of amplifiers are available but, for many technical reasons, acoustic guitar amps work best. As the amp power (wattage) increases, the sound becomes fuller and richer, as well as louder. As the wattage increases, the price of the amp increases.

Micro-amps are super portable, clip on your belt, and are $\$ 40$ or so, but limited in volume. They're great for home use or busking.

An excellent next step up is a Roland Micro-Cube, between $\$ 135$ and $\$ 235$ which has enough sound to play in a space the size of a large living room. If you are looking to perform in a larger venue, and cannot be piped through the PA system, you are looking at 60 Watts and prices starting around $\$ 500$.

Built-in amp effects on electric guitar amps are ok to get started, but do not allow you to switch sounds mid-song the way pedals do. Moreover, the electric guitar amps are used for magnetic pickups and not the piezo pickups found on electric violins.

## Bows

You do not necessarily need to buy a separate bow for your electric violin, but you may want to play more aggressively with a stiffer bow.
A carbon fiber bow is a great alternative to wood and is sturdier, making it ideal for playing electrics.
Coda Bow makes the Joule bow which is actually designed with electric players in mind. Its extra hair length and stiff stick make it ideal for more intense playing

## Effects Pedals

Effects pedals change your sound and alter your approach to playing. Basic pedals include Distortion, which makes the sound fuzzy like an old tube amp, Chorus/Flange/Pbaser, which make the sound fuller and other-worldly, and $W a h-W a b$, familiar to us all. A Loop Station will record a phrase which will repeat (loop) and allow you to record (over-dub) over it, creating a multi-layer backing track with which you can play over and improvise upon. There is a small learning curve but, by reading the manual carefully and learning from others, you will find yourself improvising in no time.

A standard group of pedals for a beginning player could include a distortion pedal, a wah-wah pedal, and a chorus pedal. One way of getting the most for your money is to buy a multi-effects pedal, which incorporates several of the aforementioned effects into one station.

Quarter-inch cables are used to connect your

