The violin first made its appearance in the early 16th century. Many unsuccessful attempts have been made to identify its inventor. It is often thought to have evolved from the viol, but its construction is very different. The violin started out as an instrument of the working classes, primarily as a dance accompaniment. It wasn't until the early part of the 17th century that violin playing was considered a suitable pastime for the gentry.

Violins

THE NEXT THING I CHECK IS THE BRIDGE. THE CONTOUR OF THE FOOT MUST EXACTLY MATCH THE CONTOUR OF THE TOP SINCE ANY GAPS CAN AFFECT the quality of the sound. The top of the bridge should be shaped for proper curvature and height so that the strings are a comfortable distance above the fingerboard. Alvarez bridges are hand carved of solid German maple and custom fitted.

I also take a look at the tailpiece and tailgut loop. I want a tailgut loop that won't stretch with humidity, rot, or break. Alvarez electrics have fine Sacconi tailgut loops that are impervious to humidity. The tailpieces are equipped with four high-quality string adjusters.

I like the electronics to give a well-balanced "acoustic" sound, with clear tones on all the strings and a wide response range. The Alvarez Hot Bar is internally mounted on our finely grained solid German maple bridge. Its strategic position creates a well balanced acoustic sound and eliminates "hot" and "cold" strings. Also, the Alvarez is made in a real violin shop, which means that it performs beautifully acoustically as well as electrically.

Alvarez Hot Bar electric pickup and solid maple bridge.