

# 2010 Buyer's Guide

## The Quest for the Great Student Viola

Advice from the experts on buying your first good viola for under \$2,500

By Erin Shrader



**HEINRICH GILL**  
58V, 16 inch  
\$2,500; [conollymusic.com](http://conollymusic.com)

**"I THINK THE BOTTOM LINE IS,** you viola nowadays than you could a long time ago," and other members of a review panel have just f violas in her junior-high-school orchestra classr this enigma of how to make a good sound evenl

"It's responsive, it does what you want," Prager said. Onderdonk clarified: "She's talking about nuance. What I like about this instrument is that you're able to get different tone colors from it, the ability to change your tone quality and atmosphere." This viola has a rich, shaded varnish and high-quality fittings, including a Kevlar tailcord.

"I remember it being talked about and talked about, as if violin makers have made it part of their mission in life to create a great smaller viola," recalls Emily Onderdonk, principal violist of the Sacramento Philharmonic, who grew up playing the viola in the 1970s.

And she is right.

ONLINE

Watch, and hear, Emily Onderdonk demonstrate the violas reviewed in this feature at [AllThingsStrings.com](http://AllThingsStrings.com).