STRADIVARIUS BREAKS A STRING

A Suzuki Musical Drama
by
Janet Fantozzi, assisted by Mattie Banzhaf

Union School
Unionville, CT 06085

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STRADIVARIUS BREAKS A STRING

another Union School Suzuki musical drama
about the great string instrument maker

Antonio Stradivarius
1644-1737

premier performances at Union School
Unionville, Connecticut
Thursday, November 14, 2002

****

Mrs. Janet Fantozzi, Suzuki strings director
Ms. Mattie Banzhaf, author and accompanist
## STRADIVARIUS BREAKS A STRING

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<tr>
<th>role</th>
<th>cast</th>
<th>needs to play</th>
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<tr>
<td>Narrators:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Antonio Stradivarius:</td>
<td>O Come</td>
<td>Book 2/3 solo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Giuseppe (older brother)</td>
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<td>Giovanni (older brother)</td>
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<td>Carlo (older brother)</td>
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<td>Father</td>
<td>O Come</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apprentices:</td>
<td>...All play</td>
<td>Lightly Row, D Scale</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alessandra</td>
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<td>Bartolina</td>
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<td>Cherubino</td>
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<td>Gabrieli</td>
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<td>Niccolo Amati:</td>
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<td>Tommasina</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parts of Violin:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strings (just one person)</td>
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<td>Allegretto pizzicato, in D</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bow</td>
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<td>French Folk Song</td>
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<td>Purfling</td>
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<td>Witches' Dance</td>
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<td>Bridge</td>
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<td>F-holes</td>
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<td>Fingerboard</td>
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<td>Tuning Pegs</td>
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<td>Tailpiece</td>
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<td>Formaggio (the Big Cheese)</td>
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<td>Bohemian Folk Song</td>
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<td>Mirror</td>
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STRADIVARIUS PLAY-LIST

O Come Little Children (key of D)  All play & sing (family on stage)
Book 5 solo  Corelli
Lightly Row (key of D)  Apprentices (on stage); All sing
D Scale ("This is the scroll" and "This is my bow")  Amati & Apprentices
Twinkle Variation A and Theme (key of D)  All play (Parts dance on stage)
Allegretto pizzicato (key of D)  Parts play pizzicato
French Folk Song (key of D)  Bow onstage; All play & sing
Andantino, alternating pizz and arco  Strings and Bow
Witches’ Dance  Fingerboard solo
Long Long Ago (Book I, key of D)  All play & sing
Book 2 solo  Antonio Stradivarius solo
Bohemian Folk Song  Formaggio
Go Tell Aunt Rhody (key of D)  All play & sing
May Song (key of D)  All play
Perpetual Motion (key of D)  All play
Allegro (key of D)  All play & sing

REMINDE RS

1. Practice your music. Practice your lines. Practice your best.
2. Speak slowly, speak clearly, speak slowly, with LOTS of expression.
4. Practice every day. Practice for your family. Practice for your canary.
6. Practice singing and speaking strongly. And slowly.
STRADIVARIUS

**SCENE 1** *(In front of the curtain)*

NARRATOR #1 Hello, everyone. I want to tell you a musical story. Parts of it are true, but some parts are totally make-believe. The character “Formaggio” is complete fiction. But the main character, Stradivarius, was a real person, and his instruments are still used today. Listen as we tell you the story of the most famous violin-maker who ever lived.

NARRATOR #2 Once, long ago in the 17th century, there was a family of violin makers. Papa Stradivarius could play violins as well as he could build them.

[Father enters & plays PUPPET SHOW, renamed The Violin Maker.]

*Family enters, still outside curtain, and everyone starts to work.* The family lived in Italy, in a town called Cremona. The whole Stradivarius family made violins, but the greatest violin-maker of them all was Antonio Stradivarius. *(The boy Antonio steps forward, holding up a tiny violin.)*

ANTONIO Mama, Papa, everyone, come look at my violin! I made it myself! Giuseppe, Giovanni, Carlo *(his brothers)*, help me try it out! *(They all take violins they’ve made, and All sing then play:)*

**O COME LITTLE CHILDREN**

**SCENE 2**

FATHER That’s fine, my son, but if you really want to learn to make violins, you must study with a great teacher. Do you truly want to do this?

ANTONIO Oh, yes, Father.

FATHER Then you will become an apprentice to Master Amati.

NARRATOR #1 And so young Antonio Stradivarius was apprenticed to the great violin maker, Nicolo Amati.

**SCENE 3** *(Curtain opens, revealing a violin-maker’s shop. Parts of unfinished violins are hanging all over the place. Several Apprentices are running around, getting into trouble. Others are practicing playing. They can pretend to play baseball or frisbee for about 10 seconds.)*

ALESSANDRA Watch me swing these violin backs! We could play tennis with them! *(Note: Alessandra is the youngest, plays violin.)*

BARTOLO Ooh, this glue is sticky. I’m going to glue you to the wall! *(Note: Bartolo is the middle child, plays viola.)*
CHERUBINO  I wonder how sharp these tools are? Come here, let me cut off your buttons! [Note: Cherubino is the oldest, plays cello.]

AMATI  (Claps his hands) Presto, quickly, come and listen! Signor Corelli is here to try out his new instrument. Let’s listen to him play.

CORELLI  (Enters, removes hat, bows, then plays) BOOK 5 SOLO [or Corelli Sonata No. 1, Op. 5, 2nd movement] (bows again, puts hat on, exits.)

AMATI  Bravo! Magnifico! Now all you Apprentices, please take your finished instruments. Let’s see how they sound.

LIGHTLY ROW All sing then play (in D: all apprentices play, as Amati conducts)

AMATI  Now gather around, everyone! We have a new apprentice. (They bend forward and look at him curiously.) This is Antonio Stradivarius. He wants to learn to make violins.

ANTONIO  Beautiful violins! The most beautiful in the world. (Apprentices react.)

AMATI  Then let’s begin. Do you know the parts of the violin?

DORABELLA  (steps forward) The scroll, the tuning pegs, the fingerboard, the f-holes, the purfling, the bridge, the tailpiece, and the four strings.

AMATI  Yes. (Amati sings up the D Major scale, they echo) This is the scroll These are the tuning pegs This is the fingerboard These are the f-holes This is the purfling This is the bridge This is the tailpiece These are the strings These are the parts of every violin. (all sing this line down the scale)

ALESSANDRA  But how do you play it?

BARTOLO  Don’t you know that? With a bow!

AMATI  Yes, and the bow has many parts too.

This is my bow (they echo) This is the stick This is the horsehair I rosin it with rosin This is the frog
This is the tightening screw
This is the grip
This is the tip
(Amati alone): These are all the parts of eve-ry bow

(while they echo, “This is the tip,” point their tips towards each other and start making the tiniest attempt at swordplay with their bows, laughing, until the Maestro says,)

Apprentices! Please! These are not children’s toys, these are the tools of a musician! With the bow we make beautiful music! Watch!

SONG: “THIS IS MY BOW” playing this time, key of D.
(Amati plays ta – titi – ta on each scale degree, Apprentices echo, then all come down the D scale, playing E twice so the playing sounds just like the songs they sang.)

ANTONIO (aside to audience): Master Amati is a fine violin maker, and he has taught me a lot. But I’m going to make my violins even better. I’m going to be the greatest violin maker in the whole world!

AMATI You’ve all had a long day, now off you go to bed. (shoos Apprentices offstage)

ANTONIO (yawning his way to sleep) …the greatest violin maker in the whole world! (exits last)

NARRATOR #2 Young Antonio fell asleep, dreaming of beautiful violins. Gradually the sky over Cremona grew darker, and the stars came twinkling out. [Lighting cue]

SCENE 4 TWINKLE var. A (key of D) All play (Violin Parts enter & dance around while everyone else plays Twinkle. Then Strings and Bow step forward and begin the argument. The other Parts stand back until it’s their turn. Note: Purfling needs calm authority.)

STRINGS I am the most important part of the violin. Why, without me, there would be no sound. In fact, that’s why the violin family is called the “Strings.”

BOW Oh yeah? You think you’re so important! But you need a bow to play the violin. Without me, you couldn’t make a sound.

STRINGS Yes I could!

BOW No you couldn’t!

STRINGS Could too!

BOW Could not!
STRINGS Could!

BOW Couldn’t!

PURFLING Strings! Bow! Stop arguing! Why don’t you solve it with music? [He looks at Bow when he says “Bow,” and looks at Strings when he says “Strings.” They listen to his words and react to him.]

STRINGS Great idea. Listen to this!

ALLEGRETTO – pizzicato

BOW Well, I guess you can play….a little….without the bow. But it doesn’t sound very good.

STRINGS Does too!

BOW Does not!

STRINGS Does!

BOW Doesn’t!

PURFLING Bow! Strings! Come on, be nice! Prove it with music! [He looks at Bow when he says “Bow,” and looks at Strings when he says “Strings.” They listen to his words and react to him.]

BOW Okay, try this without a bow!

FRENCH FOLK SONG - All sing then play [solo, or all cellos]

(As they play, remaining Parts of Violin enter, curious, admiring, listening to the beautiful tone. When it’s over, they say, “Aah!, lovely, beautiful, well done, nice tone, good bowing,” etc.)

BRIDGE But which one of you is more important? The Strings or the Bow?

F HOLEs How about a contest? (Whispers to Strings and Bow, who nod.)

ANDANTINO -- (each plays a phrase, Strings playing pizzicato and Bow playing arco, alternating, 4 beats each, starting with Strings. B section Bow starts, for 8 beats, then Strings for 8. End together [last 4 notes]. Everyone laughs. Strings & Bow give each other High Five.)

FINGERBOARD Say, you two sound pretty good when you work together. I guess you’re both pretty important.
TUNING PEGS  (importantly) But I’m even more important. I’m the Tuning Pegs, and if I go out of tune, the whole piece sounds terrible.  (Plays a note while tuning down and then up)

FINGERBOARD  Well, I’m the Fingerboard, and if it weren’t for me, there’d be no place for the fingers to find the notes on the strings! Listen! (Plays an open string while wiggling left hand fingers out in the air.)

WITCHES’ DANCE  (solo)

BRIDGE  I’m the Bridge, and I hold the Strings up above the Fingerboard so they’ll sound good. If it weren’t for me, everything would sound like slapping! (They all demonstrate slapping sounds, then agree that the Bridge is right.)

TAILPIECE  And I’m the Tailpiece, and I hold the other end of the Strings. Without me, all the strings would go zinging up in the air! (All say “zing” and laugh.)

F HÖLLES  I’m the F Holes. I may be small, but I’m very important. The beautiful sound comes out through the F Holes. If the F Holes weren’t there, the sound would be stuck inside. (They all hum with their hand over their mouth and/or pinching their nose.)

STRINGS  (looking at Purfling) Say, who are you, anyway? I’ve seen you around, but I don’t quite know what you do. What’s your name?

PURFLING  My name is Purfling, and I hold everything together. (All: huh?) Do you see these thin black lines that go all around the body of the violin? They are really tiny thin pieces of black wood. They prevent cracks from spreading and ruining the violin. (All: Wow!)

BOW  I guess you’re really important, then.

PURFLING  It doesn’t matter who’s the most important: we are ALL needed to build a fine instrument and make a beautiful tone. (All: yes, we see.) Now let’s work together and play some music.

LONG LONG AGO, Book I  (key of D) - All sing, then play. (All exit.)

SCENE 5

NARRATOR #1  After he woke up, young Antonio Stradivarius worked very hard, learning from Master Amati how to build beautiful violins. He also made bigger instruments: violas, and cellos, a double bass or two, and even some guitars! Soon he was able to build violins on his own.
STRADIVARIUS  [examines his latest creation]  This one looks pretty good.  Let’s see how it sounds.  [He starts to play, but…snap! A string breaks.]  Well, that’s no good, let’s try another.  [Same thing happens.]  My goodness, it isn’t easy to make a perfect violin.  Ah, how about this one.  [Takes the real violin to play his solo.]

BOOK 2/3 PIECE  (solo: Becker Gavotte or similar)

[Then nods in satisfaction]  Yes, that sounds fine, but I think I could make it even better.  [Exits]

NARRATOR #2  But there was another violin maker whose name was Formaggio, the Big Cheese.  Formaggio started getting worried because Stradivarius’s violins were getting to be more popular than his.  One day….

FORMAGGIO  (Looking into the ornate mirror frame held by Mirror)  Mirror, mirror, on the wall, who is the finest violin-maker of all?

MIRROR  Oh, Formaggio, you are the greatest violin-maker the world has ever known.  [Formaggio smiles and preens.]  But Stradivarius is pretty good.

FORMAGGIO  Stuff and nonsense.  He’s just a boy.  He knows nothing about violins.  Just listen to the sound of this VIOLA I just made.

BOHEMIAN FOLK SONG  (solo)

NARRATOR  A few weeks later….

FORMAGGIO  Mirror, mirror, on the wall, who is the finest violin-maker of all?

MIRROR  Oh, Formaggio, you are still the greatest violin-maker the world has ever known.  [Formaggio smiles and preens.]  But Stradivarius is getting better.

FORMAGGIO  Well, he’ll never catch up to me.  Just listen to the fantastic sound of my wonderful instruments.

GO TELL AUNT RHODY  (All sing & play – key of D)

NARRATOR  And a month afterward….

FORMAGGIO  Mirror, mirror, on the wall, who is the finest violin-maker of all?

MIRROR  You lose, Formaggio, Stradivarius has caught up to you.  Stradivarius is the greatest violin maker the world has ever known.
FORMAGGIO  Oom-possible! Why, if his violins are better than mine, everyone will buy his violins! I won’t sell anything! I’ll go broke! Boo-hoo-hoo-hoo!

NARRATOR  The wicked Formaggio set out to ruin Stradivarius’s instruments.

FORMAGGIO  I have it! I’ll sprinkle Squeak-dust on all his violins and violas, and all his cellos and basses. Then nobody will buy his instruments!

SCENE 6  (Stradivarius and Children and Apprentices on stage)

NARRATOR  All the children of Cremona were waiting for their terrific, brand new instruments made by Stradivarius. But something was terribly wrong. The new instruments sounded awful!

STRADIVARIUS  (Now wearing a white cap and a white “leather” apron) All right, children, gather around. Here are your new instruments that I have just finished making. Let’s try them out.

MAY SONG  (All play)  (All start to play, and it sounds ok. Formaggio sneaks around, sprinkles squeak dust on a few at a time. When they’re sprinkled, they start playing below the bridge. As each group starts to squeak, Stradivarius looks startled, cuts them off & cues in the next group to play. But the same thing happens to them too. Finally --)

STRADIVARIUS  Oh this is terrible. These instruments should sound wonderful. What could be wrong? Let me examine this one closely. Aha, I see, there’s a mysterious powder all over it. Could it be the dreaded Squeak Dust? There’s only one thing left to try: I’ll mix up a pot of Stradivarius’s Special Varnish to get rid of the squeak dust and bring back a beautiful tone. It’s my newest invention. I haven’t tried it out yet, but I’m sure it will work. But I don’t have all the ingredients to make my special varnish. It would be impossible to find them all. (A solution occurs to him.) Unless… Apprentices, could you help me gather the ingredients for my special varnish?

ALL APPRENTICES, PARTS, FAMILY, ETC.  Yes, of course, we’d love to, just tell us what to do, where should we go? what are "ingredients"? etc.

SCENE 7

STRADIVARIUS  Presto, quickly, (pointing to different people in turn) you bring the pine sap, you bring the bucket, you bring the brushes, you light the fire…and you play the music to keep us in perpetual motion!

PERPETUAL MOTION  (key of D) All play (as all scatter, look for things, bring things, brush off dust, paint, etc. At first the playing
sounds thin & squeaky [note: tilt bows? play near bridge? at tip?] but as it goes on the tone gets better, fuller, stronger.)

**SCENE 8**  
*(Amati enters)*

**AMATI**  
I was passing by and heard this splendid sound coming out of your window. Antonio Stradivarius, your string instruments sound fantastic. How on earth did you achieve such a gorgeous tone?

**STRADIVARIUS**  
Ah, my old master Amati, how good to see you again. Thank you for the compliment. It was very difficult to achieve this tone. All of these children and apprentices helped me find the ingredients for my Stradivarius Special Varnish.

**AMATI**  
Aah, a new varnish!

**APPRENTICES & EVERYBODY** *(all together)*  
Yes, we helped a lot. I brought the pine sap. I found the special herbs. I got the bucket. etc.

**STRADIVARIUS** *(Loudly and slowly)*  
But... it all started with Signor Formaggio. He...[was going around sprinkling Squeak Dust on all of the...]

*(Formaggio has been trying to hide in various places all this time. Note: make sure the audience can always see him. He has been moving all around, and by now he’s downstage so the audience has a good view. When Stradivarius says the name Formaggio, he jumps, startled, and looks around wildly for an escape route. But Amati interrupts, seizing Formaggio and dragging him forward.)*

**AMATI**  
Ah, Formaggio, the Big Cheese! *You* know how to make violins. I’ve been needing a new foreman for my shop. Would you like to work with me?

**FORMAGGIO** *(is so surprised, all he can do is open his mouth and nod.)*

**STRADIVARIUS** *(is about to explain, then smiles and gestures, “Let it go.”)*  
Come, everybody, let’s try out that new varnish with my favorite piece.

**ALLEGRO (All play, then sing, then play)** *(key of D)*

Happy, happy, everybody’s happy,  
Happy, happy, everybody’s glad.  
Happy, happy, everybody’s happy,  
Happy, happy, nobody is sad.  
Stradivarius made some varnish,  
Old Formaggio’s very mad…,  
Happy, happy, everybody’s happy,  
Happy happy, everybody’s glad.

*FINE*
SONG LYRICS

O Come Little Upbow (sing first, then play) – key of D
O come to my workshop, you all come on in.
O come, see what I made – my new violin.
I chiseled the wood and I carved out the bout,
I polished it smoothly both inside and out.

Lightly Row (sing first, then play) – key of D
Lightly row, lightly bow,
Let us sing now, lightly row.
Lightly rowing, lightly bowing,
Let us sing now, lightly row.
   Listen to the violin,
   Sweetly singing all day long,
   Lightly rowing, lightly bowing,
   Let us sing now, lightly row.

French Folk Song (sing first, then play) – key of D
Using my bow I can make a big tone,
Playing together or playing alone.
Find the Good Tone Spot, oh, that’s the best place;
Feet on the floor and a smile on my face;
Placement and bow weight and posture that’s great.

Long Long Ago (sing first, then play) – key of D or G?
Tell me the tale that I heard long ago,
Tell me the story with strings and with bow,
Long Long Ago, Long Ago.
We play together, and we play alone.
We play with feeling, with heart and with tone.
See Stradivarius – on with the show,
Long Long Ago, Long Ago.

Go Tell Aunt Rhody -- key of D
Tell Stradivarius, Tell Antonio,
Tell Stradivarius my fiddles are the best.
Mine the best violins, my best vi-o-o-las,
Mine the best cellos, and my bass!
Tell Stradivarius, Tell Antonio,
Tell Stradivarius my fiddles are the best.

Allegro -- key of D
Hap-py, hap-py, ev-ry-bod-y's hap-py, Hap-py, hap-py, ev-ry-bod-y's glad.
Hap-py, hap-py, ev-ry-bod-y's hap-py, Hap-py, hap-py, no-bod-y is sad.
Strad-i-var-i-us made some var-nish, Old For-ma-ggio's ve-ry mad……,
Hap-py, hap-py, ev-ry-bod-y's hap-py, Hap-py, hap-py, ev-ry-bod-y's glad.
STRADIVARIUS BREAKS A STRING

COSTUMES: Please start now to be sure your child has all the necessary clothing for our play.

ALL BOYS: (Narrators, Antonio, brothers, father, Apprentices, Amati, Corelli, Children, Formaggio, but NOT Parts of Violin)

Long-sleeve white dress shirt (old-fashioned if possible)
Long pants: Amati, Antonio & Apprentices wear brown or tan, Corelli, Formaggio & Father wear black or blue, Children & brothers may wear any color pants
Dressy shoes
Long white socks (soccer socks are ok, but no stripes)
Vest

Apprentice boys, Amati & Stradivarius also need a white chef’s apron
Corelli also needs an ascot at his neck and a jacket. We’ll provide the hat.
Formaggio also needs a cape and a black or brown chef’s apron.

ALL GIRLS: (Narrator, Mother, Apprentices, Children, Mirror…but NOT Parts of Violin)

Long dress (we will have some that we’re borrowing, but if you have your own, it may fit better), Dress shoes (non-skid soles if possible)

Apprentice girls also need a white chef’s apron.
Apprentice girls and Girl Children also need an old-fashioned cap.

PARTS OF VIOLIN: Sweatsuit: see color assignments below.
If you wish to trade colors with someone else, you may arrange that.
We will provide the actual parts of instrument and the sign that names the part.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part</th>
<th>Color</th>
<th>Decoration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strings</td>
<td>black</td>
<td>4 silver strings down the front of the sweatsuit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bow</td>
<td>purple</td>
<td>huge bow diagonally down the front of the sweatsuit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purfling</td>
<td>white</td>
<td>black outline of a violin around front (&amp; back?) of sweatsuit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge</td>
<td>blue</td>
<td>giant bridge on front (&amp; back?) of sweatshirt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-holes</td>
<td>green</td>
<td>giant F-holes on front of sweatshirt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fingerboard</td>
<td>gray</td>
<td>giant fingerboard on front of sweatshirt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuning Pegs</td>
<td>yellow</td>
<td>4 giant tuning pegs, 2 on each side.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailpiece</td>
<td>red</td>
<td>giant tailpiece on front of sweatshirt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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STRADIVARIUS BREAKS A STRING

PROP LIST

Nothing valuable or dangerous or fragile, please.
Parents: any of these that you can send in would be greatly appreciated.

Page 1
SET: violin-maker’s workshop
   a window or 2
   fireplace with fireside tools
   wooden work bench(es)
   wooden benches for seating
   wooden tables [for students to place their violins on]
   buckets (wooden or leather if possible)
   baskets
   tools: saws (coping, rip, miter), mallets, chisels, rasps, files, t-square, angles, etc.
   Remember these are props: nothing valuable or dangerous or fragile, please.
   straw broom
   other antique-looking furniture and items

PROPS: Old violins: teeny & regular size, also a cello or 2, and a double bass
   a guitar or two
   parts of violins for décor
   violin backs for swinging
   glue pot with stick or brush: could be real glue, but purple Silly Putty works well.
   “sharp” knife (not really. A rubber knife would be perfect.)
   tools: real-looking but not sharp. No colorful Fisher-Price toys please. Fake is ok.

Page 2
Parts of Violin and Parts Signs: see Costumes

2. Christmas-tree lights, or light-wands, or icicle lights [twinkling stars]
3. (nothing needed)
4. “Mirror”: ornate frame
5. “Squeak Dust”: bucket with some confetti or 3-hole punchings to sprinkle
6. pine sap (wooden bucket & a small pine branch)
   brushes (2” or 3” or 4” size)
   fire (cardboard fire)
   buckets (wooden if possible; leather is good too)
   bunches of herbs (weeds are fine: not too dried out)