



Exhibition of Modern Violas and Bows

Rules and Guidelines

The 2026 American Viola Society Festival is excited to offer an **Exhibition of Modern Violas and Bows**. The purpose of this event is to highlight the work of current viola and bow makers, and to bring to light the importance of Lutherie and Archeterie within the AVS's mission. This event provides an unparalleled opportunity to exhibit your work to a large and enthusiastic audience of violists from all over the world.

From Wednesday, June 3 through Saturday, June 6, 2026, instruments and bows enrolled in the Exhibition will be showcased in a central exhibition space. Exhibitors will register by purchasing a table or shared table. Each maker will be allowed to enter one viola and/or one bow to compete for the Exhibition awards.

Awards will be given in two categories:

- **Playability (violas and bows):** For the first three days, attendees of the Festival will visit the centrally located exhibit hall where they will be able to play on the Exhibition Violas and Bows. Attendees will then be given an opportunity to anonymously cast votes (via the Festival App) in favor of the instruments and bows they deem to be "most playable." They will also be able to leave feedback for the makers.
- **Tone (violas only):** On the fourth day of the Festival, a soloist selected by the AVS will give a playing demonstration featuring the 20 violas that received the most votes in the Playability round. This event will be performed for a live audience of Festival attendees, and will take place in a concert hall at James Madison University. Violas will be played behind a screen, and identified only by number, in randomized order. The audience vote on the Tone Award will be anonymous, through the Festival App. A keynote address and round-table of invited luthiers will be part of this special event.

Regulations:

- Entries to the Exhibition must come from individual makers. Exhibited violas and bows must be made by that maker. In the event that an instrument or bow has a co-maker,

please register this information in your entry form. This event will not feature workshop or factory specimens.

- Each luthier may enter only one instrument.
 - The same viola must be chosen for both the playability and tone categories. It must be chosen and registered in advance, and cannot be changed once the Festival begins.
- Each archetier may enter only one bow.
 - Bows may only be entered in the Playability category. Each bow must be chosen and registered in advance, and cannot be changed once the Festival begins.
- Makers who produce both violas and bows may enter one of each.
- All exhibiting makers may display additional instruments and bows on their table or shared table. However, only the selected viola and/or bow (clearly marked) will be considered for an award.
 - Tables are 6' in length and will be skirted, allowing for storage below.
 - Makers will be given a clear plastic 8.5 x 11" sign holder for their picture and bio. Business cards and brochures may be displayed, but banners, video, and audio displays are not allowed.
- You must carry insurance on your own instruments and bows. The AVS and James Madison University are not responsible for any loss or damage to your possessions.
- You agree to allow your viola and/or bow to be played by Festival attendees.

Entrance Fees:

- **Full Table: \$400** – Awards all of the same benefits as an Exhibitor, including two chairs, a black table cloth, a table ID, and a virtual booth in Whova, the Festival virtual platform. You will receive two badges. If needed, you may purchase additional badges as an Add-On when registering. You may choose to upgrade your visibility with any of the “Build Your Own Package” options in the Exhibitor Kit.
- **Shared Table: \$250** – Shared with one other luthier or archetier. The table comes with two chairs, a black table cloth, and two table IDs (one per exhibiting maker). You will receive one badge. If needed, you may purchase additional badges as an Add-On when registering. You may choose to upgrade your visibility with any of the À la Carte options in the Exhibitor Kit.

Makers of the winning specimens will receive a plaque and recognition from the AVS Board at the Exhibition special reception following the event. Additionally, each winner will be entitled to place a complimentary advertisement on the AVS website for six months.