How to Try a Bow

What will this bow make of me?

Gilles Saurais

A bow is not tried on like a pair of shoes. The bow you play has shaped, year after year, the way you play: your body has organised itself around it and compensates, without your knowing, for what it does not give. On the violin and viola, with a limited bow, the right arm presses to obtain sound while the left side holds the instrument back: the body works against itself. On the cello and double bass this opposition disappears, but the right arm must then generate on its own, from the shoulder, all the support the bow fails to deliver. Changing bows therefore means reprogramming all of this — and, in time, the musician's musical imagination itself. The real question is not whether a bow sounds good, but what it will make of you.

Every bow has a price, paid once, and a cost, paid every day you play it. This protocol proposes another way of trying a bow: a few very simple exercises, done by two people, that reveal what each bow really offers and what it will cost, rather than the impression of the first few minutes. It opens with what you need to know in order to read them, then describes seven steps; more detailed explanations are gathered at the end, followed by a grid for recording observations and counting the cost.

1. What to know before trying

Trying a bow is not a search for the one that “sounds good” the moment you pick it up. It is a search for the one that will allow you, over time, to place your attention on your musical idea rather than on the gesture needed to produce it.

This distinction rests on a simple reality: the production of sound involves two actors — the conscious musician, who thinks the music, imagines it and builds the inner song, and a second system, largely automatic, which we call here the pilot: the one that translates this musical thought into a bodily execution programme. The pilot constantly registers parameters the conscious musician usually ignores: the bow's response time, the available power (the share of the arm's energy that the bow actually manages to inject into the instrument), the sustain of the sound, the timbre. From these parameters it decides, without consulting you, how much effort to supply and how much control to exert to obtain the result requested.

You have built your pilot over time, from the acoustic and mechanical performance of your current bow. It organises the whole execution without your knowledge: it decides how much compensation you bring to your playing in order to produce the musical message you want. By the time you begin to play, it has already anticipated the playing programme; its role is then mainly to monitor its execution. In our experience, most musicians play in compensation; few can concentrate fully on the music while letting their bow do its work.

A bow whose acoustic function is limited forces compensation: to obtain the desired sound, extra effort must be supplied and part of one's attention devoted to controlling the gesture — the musician controls the bow's work. A bow whose acoustic function performs well asks only for useful effort: it allows the musician to let the bow play.

This is the shift to observe during a trial: where does my attention go — to the musical idea, or to manufacturing the gesture that produces it?

A trial conducted without method speaks only to the conscious musician: it produces an overall impression, an “I like it” or an “I don't”. When discomfort appears, it signals that the bow under trial conflicts with what the pilot had planned: its predictive programme no longer works, and it has no time to compute another. It does not adapt; it pulls the alarm — an alarm that says neither why nor in which direction, and that never passes on what the pilot has already noticed and begun to compensate for: what rises to the surface is the alarm, not the diagnosis. The protocol that follows aims precisely to give the conscious musician access, even partial, to what the pilot already knows. (This mechanism — and what it implies for teaching, violin making and listening — is developed in full in the book cited below.)

One point needs stating here, because it runs against intuition: moving from a bow of low acoustic efficiency to one of higher efficiency does not always bring immediate comfort, and discomfort does not point in one direction. An experienced musician, used for years to compensating for a bow of limited acoustic function, may feel real discomfort with a high-performing bow — precisely because it no longer asks for the compensations on which their technique was built: their pilot cannot keep up, and resists what they are trying to do. A sensitive bow does not forgive pressure: it faithfully renders what the hand inflicts on it, including what it imposes without need. The reverse is also true: a musician used to a high-performing bow will feel uncomfortable on a limited one, for the opposite reason. In both cases, discomfort signals that the pilot is disturbed, attempts more or less brutal corrections, then pulls the alarm; it does not say whether the bow is at fault or the old programming is resisting. That is what the following steps help to untangle, rather than relying on first impressions.

At the other extreme, immediate ease can be even more misleading. Many musicians choose a bow on a “love at first sight” — that immediate sense of rightness, where everything seems in place within minutes. This often signals not the bow's intrinsic quality, but the fact that it fits exactly into the extension of the compensations already in place: the musician finds their usual bearings, their old slippers, with at most a little extra timbre. In other cases, the new bow calls for a slightly different compensatory system and gives the impression that “this is it, this is the solution”: this happens often with musicians who have reached the limits of a bow that is too stiff or too resistant and try one that is too soft, or the reverse — it seems to correct the previous bow's defect, without first revealing its consequences for the neuromotor system. Immediate comfort is therefore no more a criterion of choice on its own.

Two talents that are easily confused must be distinguished here. Musical talent — imagination, intention, the inner song — is not the talent for compensating for a system that works badly. A musician may possess the first to a very high degree and nevertheless remain a prisoner of a limited bow: they will produce beautiful music, but at the price of a compensatory effort the listener does not hear, and that the musician ends up no longer perceiving as effort. This is precisely what makes judging by ear, on repertoire, misleading: one hears the musical talent, never the cost of compensation paid to express it through that particular bow.

A second point follows. At the moment of the trial, the musician's pilot remains programmed for the bow they usually play; the one being tried is, for now, merely an unknown object to which no compensation has yet been adjusted. The older and more extensive the compensatory system built around the current bow, the longer it will take for the pilot to abandon it and integrate the new bow's parameters: from three months to a year, depending on the case. Hence the value, in order to try well, of becoming aware of what the bow under trial will ask your pilot to change in your playing technique.

This does not make the trial pointless — it clarifies its purpose. The aim is not to judge a bow on the command one has of it after a few minutes, a command that does not yet exist and cannot exist, but to identify what each bow already offers as raw material — its response, its power, its sustain, its timbre — independently of the ability, still to be built, to exploit it fully. That is exactly what the following steps make it possible to isolate.

This is why the trial is not done by playing repertoire. As soon as the musician plays music, and especially technical passages and bow strokes, the old system automatically takes back control: the demand to produce a phrase, a line, an intention, instantly reactivates the usual compensations, and the pilot falls back on the settings it knows. The very simple exercises that follow — open strings, a slow scale, a sustained note — aim precisely to switch off this automatic takeover temporarily, freeing the gesture from any musical constraint, so that the musician's attention can rest, for a few minutes, on what the bow actually does rather than on what must be drawn from it. Their simplicity has nothing of a warm-up: it is the only way to hear the bow before the old habit answers in its place.

2. The protocol

A trial guided by an experienced professional remains the best option: they can lead each step, bring their own eye and ear, and establish a precise diagnosis by taking into account every link in the chain of sound production. Failing that, this protocol can also be practised at home, on two conditions: play only simple exercises, as explained above, and be accompanied by a third person — a relative, a teacher, a fellow musician — no particular technical skill being required. It then gives no diagnosis, but leads from which the musician can reflect.

The role of this third person is not limited to the practical actions described below. At every step, including the simplest exercises, their opinion counts as much as the musician's own feeling: the musician judges from the inside — the effort supplied, the ease with which the sound comes — while the third person judges from the outside — what they hear, from a point in the room the musician will never occupy while playing. The two points of view do not always coincide, and it is precisely in that gap that much of the information lies: a bow may require less effort without the result changing for the listener, or the reverse. The third person should therefore be invited to comment aloud on what they perceive at every step, not only the last ones. They also watch the musician's body — hand, wrist, shoulders, shoulder blade, neck, jaw: tension that appears, or disappears, from one bow to the other is first-order information. The grid at the end of this document provides, for each step, a column for each of the two.

One practical point, finally: trials go better with the hair only lightly tightened. Hair that is too tight masks some of the differences between bows and makes it harder to read the signs sought at each step.

Each step is played with the musician's usual bow, then with the bow under trial, in that order, to allow comparison. The title of each step names the parameter it isolates, after a first check of the stick's stability. Each ends with what that parameter costs the musician when it is lacking: the exercise lasts only a few moments, but it takes a sample of a cost that will be paid, note after note, for as long as the bow is played.

Step 1 — Stability of the stick: *an open string, very slowly, without effort — the bow resting on the string under its own weight alone — along the full length of the bow.*

Watch whether the stick trembles or vibrates irregularly (wobble). This sign cannot be read on its own: it can have two opposite origins.

First origin, the stick itself: if its two parts offer different resistances — most often a first part that is stiffer and a second that is more flexible — the musician learns to compensate. They lock the bow, with the hand, the wrist, the shoulder, sometimes the shoulder blade, and increase the pressure as they pass the change in stiffness. Depending on the bow, they manage this more or less well; some manage it roughly, but always feel the discomfort of the passage in the middle of the stick.

Second origin, the musician: with a coherent, elastic bow of high acoustic efficiency, a tremor signals that the pilot keeps sending a useless impulse into the stick — superfluous pressure in the middle of the stick. The more sensitive the bow is to this kind of gesture, the more clearly the tremor appears. In both cases, the pilot's reflex when faced with a wobble is the same: lock the bow to prevent it, usually by tightening the hand and wrist. With a stable bow, this tightening is no longer needed: the hand regains its suppleness, and that is one constraint fewer on everything the musician can build afterwards.

A tremor that also appears with the usual bow is a reference point to keep for what follows. Which of the two origins it belongs to is one of the points where a professional's eye makes the difference; alone, the musician can at least ask the question: does this tremor come from the stick, or from what I send into it?

What it costs. A stick that trembles at slow speed must be immobilised by the hand, and this holding does not stop when the tempo increases: it disappears into the fingers and wrist, is paid at every stroke, and is taken from the freedom those joints should have kept. That much energy is withdrawn from the music, and the body suffers daily wear.

Step 2 — Response: *a slow scale, one note at a time.*

Notice the time that elapses between placing the finger and the real start of the sound. The shorter this delay, the less the gesture has to be anticipated to compensate for a bow that responds late — which is exactly what the pilot does with the usual bow: it has calculated its response time and knows with what anticipation, in milliseconds, to send the fingers and the bow in order to start at the “right moment”. A responsive bow changes the picture, to the point of disconcerting at first — an orchestral musician, in particular, will tend to start before the others the first few times. But it is also one less anticipation to calculate all the time, and so a share of attention returned to the music itself.

What it costs. A bow that responds late teaches the arm to leave early. The musician then lives constantly a little ahead of their sound, never quite inside it. This anticipation carries over to changes of note and of bow: the next note must be launched before the previous one has been able to finish, and the bow change becomes hard to round off — one of the sources of the “tam-tam” effect. A short sustain, in the next step, makes this effect worse still.

Step 3 — Sustain: *an open string, played along the full length of the bow, then the bow lifted at the end of the note without cutting the sound.*

This step gives an idea of the duration and content of the sound. Once the bow is lifted, the sound does not stop at once: it continues in successive waves, rising and falling in intensity as they decrease. Each lasts about a second: this is not the rapid pulsation of the hair on the string, but the energy that string, bridge and body continue to exchange once the bow has left. Listen to how long the sound keeps unfolding and count the waves before it dies away completely, up to ten. An average bow often lets two or three be heard; a high-performing bow, six or more. Repeat on each string: you obtain four time budgets, one per register. This time gives a direct idea of the margin the musician has for changing note or bow without breaking the sound.

Listen also to what happens to the pitch: with a limited bow, the sound stays straight on the fundamental, more or less loud; with a good bow, the waves are accompanied by a simultaneous variation of pitch around the fundamental, the wider the better the bow, like a gentle swaying. This adds a further dimension, a thickness to the sound: the fundamental is wrapped in a sheath of frequencies that gives it grain and substance — we say that the sound is sheathed.

The pilot manages this sustain constantly: it adjusts note changes, and above all bow changes, so as to avoid any break in sound production. Very often, the musician does not give the listener time to benefit fully from the note just produced, and creates a “tam-tam” effect at the bow change. A generous sustain loosens this constraint: the musician can let the note live fully before moving on, and regains a margin to build the phrase rather than fragmenting it out of necessity. The quality of the sustain thus conditions the quality of the silence that follows.

What it costs. This is probably the heaviest item, because it is paid on every note. The pilot knows how long each note will survive and organises everything around that deadline: the bow change comes early, the next note is prepared before the present one has finished its work, the phrase leans forward. The musician does not feel this as effort; it seems to be the natural pace of playing. It is nevertheless a permanent state of haste, all the more marked as the sustain is short: a bow that grants two waves where another grants six forces you to live, permanently, with a third of the time.

Step 4 — Power and efficiency: *a rising scale on the lowest string, going as high as possible on the fingerboard.*

Note whether the sound stays stable and whether the effort increases as you climb, or whether, on the contrary, it remains accessible without forcing. A bow that lets you climb without losing the sound leaves the choice of fingering to artistic intention, rather than to the need to avoid shifts for safety. What is at stake is the bow's energy efficiency: the share of the musician's energy that actually reaches the instrument. A standard bow often absorbs more than half of it, which pushes the musician to force — and since the instrument demands more energy the higher one climbs, a low-efficiency bow pushes the pilot to confine the musician to the lower positions, even at the cost of sacrificing the aesthetic choice of timbre, and to go up and come down again as fast as possible for safety. How much the bow absorbs, and where it is lost, is one of the points where a professional's eye makes the difference. With a high-efficiency bow, this constraint disappears: the whole range of the instrument becomes accessible at the same cost, and choosing a fingering becomes again a question of timbre, not of survival.

What it costs. The climb acts as a magnifying glass. The extra effort required at the top of the lowest string is not confined to the high positions: it is present, diluted, in every note played with

this bow, because the same energy deficit has to be made up everywhere. Over a lesson, a rehearsal, a concert, the energy spent is roughly proportional to the effort this climb required. What the test shows in thirty seconds, the arm pays for over hours. On the violin and viola, the deficit is paid on both sides: the right arm presses, the left side holds the instrument back, and the joints of the left hand must work under constraint; on the cello and double bass, the right arm alone supplies the support. The more power the bow transmits, the less the body wears.

Step 5 — Power, from another angle: *the vibration transmitted to the instrument.*

The musician plays the lowest open string while holding the scroll in their free hand, to feel directly the energy transmitted. Then the third person holds the scroll instead, and the musician places their hand on different areas of the back of the instrument while playing the open string: this gives an idea of the energy the instrument receives and gives back — in other words, what the listener receives. This simple test gives a first idea of the instrument's capacity to project sound and, by comparing several bows, makes it possible to assess their respective energy efficiency in another form; it also lets you feel how the neck stores and spreads energy. It can then be repeated from the other strings. This step assesses energy efficiency from another angle; with a professional, it can also be used to compare the same bow on two instruments.

What it costs. Here, the cost changes hands. If the back vibrates less, the energy the musician puts into the string is not lost to them — the sound under the ear may remain satisfying; it is lost to the listener, who never receives it. The musician senses, without knowing why, that the sound does not carry, and adds more: more pressure, more weight, more bow. This surplus is paid twice: by the arm, and by the sound, which pressure hardens as it makes it louder.

Step 6 — Timbre: *listening from the listener's position.*

The musician plays a simple passage while the third person, standing behind them, covers their ears with their hands to attenuate the direct sound coming from the instrument. The musician then hears more of the sound as it spreads through the room, rather than the sound perceived right next to the top plate — a simple approximation of the listener's point of hearing, to be compared between the two bows.

Before playing, the musician sets themselves a musical intention — a character, a colour, a direction — and keeps it to themselves, without telling the third person. Once the passage has been played, the third person says what they perceived, without knowing what was intended; the musician then reveals their intention. The gap, or the match, between the intention and what the third person actually heard is one of the richest returns of the protocol: it shows whether the bow allows the musical intention to travel all the way to the listener, or whether it gets lost on the way.

What it costs. The gap that remains between what the musician hears and what reaches the room is always paid by someone: by the musician, in effort added to close it, or by the listener, in music that never arrives.

Step 7 — Timbre: *playing piano.*

Piano is one of the hardest dynamics to render: as in singing, it requires a great deal of air and energy, with a very controlled flow. The musician plays each string piano, one after the other, keeping the bow well engaged in the string; the third person judges whether the piano is full, precise and present, or whether it shrinks to the hiss of a cat, without projection.

What it costs. A bow that does not hold the piano engaged in the string forces a choice: press to make it present, and one then plays less loud rather than piano; or lighten, and the sound shrinks to a breath that does not carry. Either way, the palette of dynamics narrows from below, exactly where singing demands the most mastery.

Once all these tests have been carried out, the musician can select a bow and begin playing tests on pieces that are not technically demanding. The aim is then to focus all the musician's attention on the sound they imagine, without worrying about the bodily action that produces it — letting the body act freely, entirely in the hands of the pilot — and to observe what happens.

3. Reading the results

Each exercise isolates a precise criterion. The following table shows how to read what the bow under trial reveals, depending on whether its acoustic function is limited or performs well.

Criterion (step)	**Bow with limited acoustic function**	**Bow with high-performing acoustic function**
Stability on the string (step 1)	Unstable, even under its own weight, without any muscular input	Stable on the string
Response (step 2)	Slow	Fast
Sustain (step 3)	Rapid decay (two or three waves), sound straight on the fundamental	Slow decay (six waves or more), pitch sways with intensity
Power (steps 4 and 5)	Weak: effort grows as you climb, the back vibrates little	Present: same effort across the whole range, the back vibrates
Timbre (steps 6 and 7)	Poor; intention poorly perceived by the third person; piano without projection	Rich; intention recognised; piano full and present
What it produces in the musician	Compensation	Progressive release of compensation, possible

None of these signs can be read in isolation, and the same observation can have two opposite causes: the wobble (step 1) and discomfort (section 1) are examples. The bow's elasticity must also be taken into account — the consistency of its resistance from one part of the stick to another, its stiffness or suppleness — which plays a part both in stability and in the trap of love at first sight. Only a professional can make a precise diagnosis from these observations; alone, the musician will find leads for reflection.

These criteria lead to a practical conclusion: if you find a bow that offers a more direct response, better power, and a longer and richer sustain than your own, that bow will probably help you free yourself from your compensatory constraints, allowing you to give more attention to your music and, in time, to make full use of your musical ideas.

4. What this test can and cannot do

This protocol makes it possible to compare what two bows offer, here and now, on precise criteria, and what each will cost day to day. It also helps to anticipate: it shows in which direction the bow will lead the musician — towards more compensation or towards releasing it — and what

potential it offers. This anticipation is all the more reliable when read by a professional, but it can help the musician's own reflection.

It does not say, on the other hand, how long it will take the musician to master the chosen bow, nor how far: that mastery is built over time, not in a single session, as noted above about the pilot.

Moving from a low-efficiency bow to one of high acoustic efficiency entails reprogramming the pilot over time, which in turn will entail reprogramming the musician's musical imagination. During this period, the pilot will gradually recalculate the bow's acoustic and mechanical parameters and correct the musician's execution programmes. This work happens day by day, consciously in part (placing attention on the sound) and unconsciously in part (giving the pilot time to reorganise). Its duration varies greatly from one musician to another: some move quickly on the main points and take longer to refine the details, others progress more slowly but more evenly across the board — the difference also depends on whether a biomechanics specialist is involved, and on the musician's level of body awareness. Allow, depending on the case, from three months — for a musician already equipped with a bow of medium sensitivity and good acoustic efficiency — to a year, when the technique has been built very far from what a high-performing bow allows. We recommend that musicians work during this transition with physiotherapists who specialise in musicians' biomechanics, and more broadly with professionals who know the whole chain of sound production — bow, instrument, gesture, body — and can diagnose the different sources of dysfunction.

Finally, this test isolates precise acoustic and gestural parameters; it does not settle on its own questions that remain specific to each musician — budget, maintenance, resale value, attachment to a bow already known — to which must be added the durability of the body, the musician's first tool. This protocol provides solid material to inform the choice, by weighing the consequences of each path. It does not decide in the musician's place.

5. After the trial: two situations, two goals

Choosing a bow does not answer the same question depending on where one starts from.

For a beginner or a musician at an early stage, whose gesture has not yet had time to set around the limits of a particular bow, choosing means finding the bow that produces the sound with only the useful effort — without building, from the start of learning, compensations that will later become habits hard to undo.

For an advanced or professional musician, the situation is almost always different: in the great majority of cases, they play a bow of limited acoustic function, and have already built, often without knowing it, a compensatory system to draw the best possible sound from it. Choosing a new bow then means deciding between two paths, each with its consequences. Staying in the extension of one's current compensations, seeking a better sound without calling the established technique into question: one moves fast, but stays within one's frame, and keeps paying for compensation with one's body. Or beginning an evolution towards a playing technique of higher energy and acoustic efficiency, at the price of a real integration period and often short-term discomfort: one moves more slowly at first, but can hope to exploit one's full potential, with a body better spared. When compensation is very old, the best route is not always the most direct: a bow of intermediate sensitivity can serve as a stage while the gesture rebuilds itself, before moving to a more sensitive bow. The right choice depends less on the bow than on the musician: on their readiness for change, their body awareness, the moment they are at.

In both cases, the question remains the same: what will this bow make of me? Too broad to be settled by ear, it breaks down into two questions that the trial helps to examine. The first is a cost: how much useless effort, how much compensation will this bow ask of me, and for how long? The second is an opening: what field of expression does it offer me — what can I reach that I already sense, without yet being able to touch it? Both come down to a single measure: does this bow widen or narrow the space in which my pilot can work, and what share of my potential will it allow me to exploit?

6. Understanding: what compensation costs the body

The stakes are not only musical. To compensate is to force, and forcing wears: the desired sound is then obtained at the expense of the body's sound mechanical functioning, with, in the long run, a risk of injury. Yet the body is the musician's main tool, and its durability must count in the analysis of the trial as in the choice that follows. Playing-related musculoskeletal disorders affect, according to the studies, between 64 and 90% of bowed-string players (Kochem and Silva, 2018). These figures show the scale of the problem, not its mechanism: it is years of observation in the workshop that lead us to see compensation as one of the factors, and a bow one can let play as one means of reducing the risk — one means among others, which removes a cause without treating an injury: persistent pain calls for medical and biomechanical examination.

This compensation does not stay where it arises. We regularly observe that it spreads in a chain — hand, wrist, shoulder, shoulder blade, neck, jaw — including in cellists, whose instrument rests on the floor: in a very high-level cellist, we observed a systematic tightening of the jaw at every bow change. On the violin and viola, instruments held by the body, any extra support the bow demands to obtain sound, compared with a bow of high acoustic efficiency, must be held back by the side that carries the instrument — usually the left — the very side that must remain free for the left arm, the left hand and vibrato. The right arm thus produces a compensatory effort of pressure while the left produces the opposite effort of restraint. From our observations, a good bow makes it possible to engage the back muscles rather than leaning on the shoulder, on the right for the bow as on the left for vibrato.

A word, finally, on discomfort itself. We read it as a threat response: the amygdala takes over, pressure rises throughout the body and the conscious level is disconnected — but the musician feels it. This would explain why discomfort says so little: at the moment it appears, the part of the musician capable of analysis is precisely the part switched off.

Further reading

Gilles Saurais, *L'archet, au cœur de l'acoustique, du geste et de la pédagogie* (Symétrie, Lyon, 2026). English edition forthcoming.

Reference

Kochem F. B., Silva J. G., “Prevalence of Playing-related Musculoskeletal Disorders in String Players: A Systematic Review”, *Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics*, 2018, 41(6), 540-549.

Bow trial — counting the cost

Every bow has a price, paid once, and a cost, paid every day you play it.

Musician: …… Instrument: …… Third person: …… Date: ……

Usual bow: …… Bow under trial: ……

Conditions: ☐ hair lightly tightened ☐ same instrument, same room ☐ usual bow first, at every step ☐ simple exercises, no repertoire

Step	**What to observe — and the question to ask**	**My bow Musician (what I feel)**	**My bow Third person (what they hear and see)**	**Bow under trial Musician (what I feel)**	**Bow under trial Third person (what they hear and see)**
1. Stability	Does the stick tremble? Where? *Do I grip to hold it, and where?*				
2. Response	Delay between placing the finger and the real start of the sound. *How far ahead of the sound do I leave?*				
3. Sustain	Number of waves after the bow is lifted, string by string (cello shown; violin: G, D, A, E). Does the sound sway? *This missing time — do I make it up by rushing?*	C …… G …… D …… A ……	C …… G …… D …… A ……	C …… G …… D …… A ……	C …… G …… D …… A ……
4. Climbing the lowest string	Where the sound gives way; where effort begins. *Do I pay this effort only at the top of the fingerboard?*	sound gives way at: …… I force from: ……	sound gives way at: …… I force from: ……	sound gives way at: …… I force from: ……	sound gives way at: …… I force from: ……
5. Back of the instrument	What the hand feels vibrating, at the scroll then on the back. *To make it carry, what do I add?*				
6. The third person listens	Intention set and kept secret; what the third person perceived. *What should I have added for it to come through?*	My intention:	What I perceived:	My intention:	What I perceived:
7. Piano	Full and present — or a hiss, without projection? *Truly piano, or merely less loud by pressing?*				
The body, at every step	Hand, wrist, shoulder, shoulder blade, neck, jaw: what tightens, what releases from one bow to the other. *Where am I paying?*				

This protocol draws on the framework developed in Gilles Saurais, *L'archet, au cœur de l'acoustique, du geste et de la pédagogie* (Symétrie, Lyon, 2026; English edition forthcoming) — isophonia.org

The count

What will this bow make of me? The question is too broad to be settled by ear; it breaks down into two counts — what it costs, what it opens — kept for both bows before choosing one's path.

What it costs me

Useless effort, compensation: in effort, in fatigue, in music — over a session, over a season? With my bow, with the bow under trial?

What it opens for me

What field of expression does it offer me? What can I reach that I already sense, without yet being able to touch it?

What it asks me to change

Which habits will have to go, and over what time (from three months to a year, depending on the case)? With what support — teacher, biomechanics specialist?

My path

Stay in the extension of my compensations, or commit to a technique of higher efficiency? Is an intermediate stage needed?

The price, only afterwards
