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Environmental Changes Affect Oboes and English Horns

Choosing the correct materials of construction for your next Oboe or English Horn is vital to how your instrument will mature over its lifetime. Here, we offer you our expert insights into the importance of which materials of construction you should consider – based on our concerns for the probability of cracking due to environmental causes; with specific acknowledgment to an instrument in a four-season climate and/or a climate that experiences extreme changes in temperature, pressure, or humidity throughout the year.

The impact of localized environmental fluctuations have on an instrument are often minimized during the selection of an instrument and subsequently during ownership. For this reason, ***we've authored this document solely with the purpose to raise your level awareness and generally clarify the information regarding this subject prior to the selection and evaluation process.*** Doing so permits us to have a more vigorous dialogue about which instrument is right for you, and also helps ensure that when you make a purchase from Hannah's Oboes, you will have more confidence in your purchase throughout its lifecycle.

Wood instruments crack. That said, there are the outliers, wood instruments that have remained "crack-free" during their performance histories. Undoubtedly, preventative care has played a positive role in these instruments' lives, but it's here that we wish to make the distinction that these instruments are the exception and not the rule. An all-wood instrument may still be right for you. We encourage a comprehensive selection process and a care-plan to be implemented that is both thoughtful and manageable.

For those owners living in a climate presenting instrument cracking challenges, Hannah's Oboes recommends instruments be constructed using either a mixed or synthetic material of construction (see chart below). Tonal differences of these instruments can be subjective – our final recommendations of which instruments selected for your evaluation take this into account. We encourage our clients to use this as a ***starting point of conversation***; this being between us at Hannah's Oboes, your instructor, and of course you!

	Recommended for a Four-Season Climate	Inventory Available
Lined Top-Joint (Partially or Fully Sleeved)		
Plastic/Acrylic Top-Joint		
Ebonite Top-Joint		
All synthetic body		
All wood body	