

Instruments in dry climates And/Or humidity extremes

To our friends in areas of dry climates
or humidity extremes:

The largest enemy to musical instruments is extremes in temperature and humidity. Normally temperatures between 50 and 80 degrees are O.K., (that means don't leave them in the trunk or in a hot car or direct sun, etc.), and humidity between 40 and 55 percent is O.K. When the extremes outside go beyond that, we have to take measures to protect our instruments.

Particularly in dry climates, whether hot or cold, the wood dries. When it dries it shrinks, and when it shrinks it can crack.

High humidity causes wood to swell. If a top or back swells too much it can warp.

A simple humidifier and hygrometer inside the case is strongly recommended. You can purchase them at many music stores.

All fine instruments built with solid woods are susceptible to problems caused by humidity extremes. Because autoharps are built on a very rigid frame, there is little room to expand and contract.

It is not something to worry about, you just need to be aware of it and ready to do what is needed. Protect your instrument appropriately when needed. If a small crack does develop, it does not affect the sound, nor does it weaken the structure, but you don't want to invite it. Larger cracks can affect how the instrument plays. When caused by humidity and temperature extremes, warranties do not cover damages, and fixes can be expensive.

The wood in d'Aigle autoharps is well seasoned. It is kiln dried, air dried and vacuum dried prior to being used. We also seal the wood inside and out. However the wood is still vulnerable under extreme conditions.

If you are not sure if you need to humidify your instrument, or if the humidity is too high, purchase a hygrometer for your case and for your home where it is kept. Hygrometers and instrument humidifiers are not expensive.

Your autoharp was built in a controlled environment of between 40 and 50 percent relative humidity, and temperatures ranging from 62 to 75 degrees. Keep these parameters in mind, take appropriate steps to protect it, and your d'Aigle autoharp will give you many years of great music and enjoyment.