



## Banjos



BANJO IS A COMPLICATED INSTRUMENT TO INSPECT. IT HAS A WOODEN RESONATOR, A METAL TONE RING, AND A TAUT-STRETCHED HEAD, ALL OF which must work together to get the true banjo sound.

But the first thing I look at is the neck: I lay a straightedge along the fingerboard to check for warping. A warp of as little as a tenth of an inch can make a banjo hard to tune. Alvarez banjos are built to prevent warping, with a bias-cut Nato mahogany or hard rock maple neck, laminated resonator shell, and steel reinforcing rods.

I then check the action and adjust the string height — not too high for comfort, but not low enough to buzz against the fingerboard.

I look for a coordinator rod, a sure sign of a high quality instrument. All but one Alvarez banjo has two coordinator rods for increased adjustability, and the neck is attached to the body by a hand cut and finished heel.

Most Alvarez banjos have flat-head tone rings for a deep, resonant tone. The Whyte Eagle features an arched tone ring with a smaller vibrating surface for that special old-time sound — crisp and bright, with a sharper, more responsive tone.

4310 Whyte Eagle. Turn of the century design. Bell brass arched tone ring and hoop. Three-ply laminated maple 3/4" shell. Hand engraved fingerboard inlays. Five-piece maple neck with rosewood inlay. Hand carved heel. Maple resonator with purfling. Planetary pegs.



4310 Whyte Eagle/Hand carved maple neck.

