



MAKER'S BENCH

The New Rondo Strings from Thomastik-Infeld

by John Waddle

I just received the first shipment of Rondo strings for cello and am anxious to try them. Whenever new strings come on the market, I like to test them myself first, and then ask musicians to try them and give me their impressions. I will be doing this in the coming days.

Thomastik-Infeld has been making strings since 1919, in Vienna, Austria. They are a major player in the orchestral string making business. They came out with their new line of Rondo strings for violin last year and those have been catching on. Some very good musicians have been buying and using them for a while now and are coming back for more. This tells me that I need to pay attention. I am waiting to see if they come out with Rondo strings for viola.

Thomastik-Infeld came out with their famous Dominant strings more than 30 years ago, and Dominant strings are still the strings to beat for rental and student instruments. Dominants are the one brand of strings I try to never be out of. A couple of years ago, they came out with their new Peter-Infeld "PI" strings for violin, which in my experience have been quite successful, and then they came out with the PI strings for viola, which I also like quite well, and have been wondering if they would come out with PI strings for cello.

The most common set of cello strings in my shop for a long time was Spirocore Tungsten C and G strings, with Jargar D and A strings. Then the Jargar D and A strings got some competition from Larsen strings, made in Denmark, which in my

shop have taken over as the most popular upper two strings for cello. This seemed to be the case in many shops here in the US, as well as other parts of the world, and was frustrating for Thomastik, so they developed the Versum set, which they promoted as a new solution to the brand combining problem. I have had good experience with the Versum strings and have them on several of my cellos. Thomastik-Infeld promoted the Versum line as a whole balanced set in order to provide a set of cello strings all from one source, and I think they have had some success, so I am curious to find out how the new Rondo strings will compare.

These strings I have been talking about are expensive compared to many other strings. A set of Versum cello strings will cost close to \$400.00, and a set of Rondos will cost roughly the same. If you are looking for decent strings for much less money, Thomastik also makes Spirit which you can get for just over \$100.00 for a set, and Alphayue strings for students, which you can get for under \$100 for a set. These are relatively simple steel strings, and are perfectly fine for some instruments, but if you want only the best, I would recommend trying Versum strings, or the new Rondo line, which will be roughly the same price.

The Spirocore Cello C and G strings are described as having a spiral core, tungsten wound. The C has a tension (listed on the string package) as 29.8 lbs. The G has a tension of 30.9 lbs.

The Versum Cello C and G strings are described as having a spiral core, tungsten/

chrome wound. The C has a tension of 30.2 lb. and the G has a tension of 31.5 lb. The Versum Solo Cello C and G strings are described on the packages exactly the same way.

The Rondo Cello strings are described the same way as Spirocores (spiral core, tungsten wound), but the C string has a tension of 30.4 lbs. and the G string has a tension of 31.5 lbs. making the C slightly higher tension than both the Spirocore and the Versum strings, and the G the same tension as Versum but more than Spirocore.

The Versum cello A string has a steel core, multialloy wound, with a tension of 40.1 lbs. and the D is the same composition with a tension listed at 31.5 lbs.

The Rondo cello A string is described as carbon steel, multialloy wound, with a tension of 41.4 lbs—a bit higher tension than the Versum A. The Rondo cello D string is described the same way as the A as carbon steel, multialloy wound, with a tension of 31.5 lbs—the same tension as the Versum D.

As is always the case, time will tell how successful any of these strings will be over the long haul. The only way to know is to try them yourself.

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	A string	D string	G string	C string
Spirocore	available from manufacturer but not often stocked	available from manufacturer but not often stocked	spiral core tungsten wound 30.9 lb tension	spiral core tungsten wound 29.8 lb tension
Versum and Versum Solo	steel core multialloy wound 40.1 lb tension	steel core multialloy wound 31.5 lb tension	spiral core tungsten/chrome wound 31.5 lb tension	spiral core tungsten/chrome wound 30.2 lb tension
Rondo	carbon steel multialloy wound 41.4 lb tension	carbon steel multialloy wound 31.5 lb tension	spiral core tungsten wound 31.5 lb tension	spiral core tungsten wound 30.4 lb tension