

Environmental Policy 2017/18

I believe that a sound environmental policy is of critical importance to any musical instrument maker. Vast swathes of irreplaceable tropical rainforest in the Amazon, in the national parks of Madagascar, in Africa, in India and throughout the tropics are felled each year to satisfy the demands of the musical instrument industry for rosewood, for ebony, for mahogany, for cedar and for any number of other tropical hardwoods.

What's more, as the best trees are cut the number of trees that must be felled in an attempt to find high quality timber increases year on year. The reality is that there is very little high quality rosewood left in the world, Ebony is reduced to a handful of pockets of forest, mahogany is disappearing.

This is why I have implemented a strict but simple policy on timber sourcing.

British and European grown timber

The first cornerstone of our environmental policy is to encourage the use of timbers grown, cut, processed and sourced within Britain and the EU.

The standard configurations of all A.S. Potter instruments feature native and European timbers, and native and European timbers have been given a price break in our wood options compared to the tropical alternatives.


By working closely for many years with a large number of sawmills and suppliers large and tiny I can offer a selection high quality British or European grown timber for EVERY part of the musical instrument.

Following my move to the New Forest national park in 2017, I am also committed to being able to offer New Forest Marque certified timbers felled within the park boundaries for every part of an instrument within the next five years.

Ethically sourced tropical timber

The second part of our environmental policy is that before I buy tropical timbers I must be sure that they meet one of the following standards.

- 1- Non endangered species / species from non-threatened environments – not all foreign timber sources involve cutting down the rainforests. Several common American and Australian species, for example, are available without any problems.
- 2- From a certified, well-managed source – timber that is either FSC (Forestry Stewardship Council) certified or a similar traceable and well documented source imported through a trusted timber merchant.



3- Reclaimed and recycled – When it can be found, broken or unwanted antique furniture is a particularly good source for high quality, old growth timbers such as mahogany and rosewood.

4- In addition to the above any species that is covered by CITES, such as Brazilian cedar, MUST have the correct documentation.

If I am not certain about the source of any tropical timber I will not buy it and it will not go onto your instrument.

Alex Potter, Sway, 2017