FINISH CARE (cont.)
A good guitar polish can help clean and protect a finish. Most polishes are, however, intended for gloss finishes and should generally be avoided on satin finishes or the satin appearance will be lost. Martin Guitar Polish is one preparation that has very little polishing action and is appropriate for use on both gloss and satin finishes. A polishing compound such as Meguiar’s #7 is good for polishing gloss finishes.

CRACKS & DENTS
Cracks should be repaired as quickly as possible to prevent more damage from occurring. Keep the crack clean until it is properly glued. Unless you are experienced in instrument repair, check with us before attempting to effect this kind of repair. Nicks and dents can be repaired or not, depending on how much they bother you. Normal wear and tear results in some unsightly marks on most instruments. Cosmetic repair can be expensive and not always completely satisfactory.

HUMIDITY
In very dry environments a humidifier may be needed to protect your instrument from drying out and cracking. Your local music store should be able to furnish you with an inexpensive humidifier to put in the instrument case. We offer the Herco humidifier as a small but adequate humidifier although other brands are equally as effective. Very high humidity may cause swelling of various instrument parts and should be avoided.

ENVIRONMENT
Keep your instrument in a clean and temperate environment. A car trunk in only moderately warm weather can develop a high enough temperature to loosen glue joints and wreak havoc with an instrument. Extreme cold can cause finish cracking and various other problems. Avoid rapid changes in temperature; gradual changes are less likely to cause damage.

Thank you for buying a Blue Lion. We would like to offer the following suggestions for the care of your instrument in order to ensure you many years of enjoyment and pleasure with your new dulcimer or guitar. If after reading this pamphlet you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us — we are always happy to hear from you.

Stringed Instrument Maintenance
Your Blue Lion instrument arrives set up and ready to play. After a period of time, the length of which depends on many factors including your playing style, how much you play and the environment in which your instrument is kept, it may require minor adjustments to keep it in optimum playing condition. If you have any questions or concerns feel free to call us anytime.

Maintenance can be separated into two areas; maintaining the sound and playability and maintaining the appearance and protective quality of the finish. On the following pages are some simple suggestions to help you care for your new instrument.
Keep the nut and saddle slots clean and lubricated by scribbling some graphite from a very sharp pencil into the string slots when you change strings. If you hear a "creaking" noise when you tune, lubricate the nut and saddle with graphite. Seasonal changes may necessitate minor adjustments to the adjustable guitar neck. Make sure your instrument is not too tight or too loose. Avoid storing your instrument in temperatures that exceed 90°F.

**FINISH CARE**

Wood & Finish Care

Avoid storing your instrument's strap (or anything else) next to the finish. If you notice the finish is fading, clean it with a damp cloth and follow with a cleaner, dry cloth. Kerosene or mineral spirits can soften and discolor the finish, so be careful with cleaning products. Clean your instrument with a damp cloth, following the manufacturer’s instructions. Fretboards should be cleaned and oiled with a high-quality fingerboard oil.

**SOUNDS & PLAYERABILITY**

Strings

- Change your strings periodically. We recommend light gauge strings for your guitar. For your dulcimer, check your price list or our website under Accessories for the gauges we recommend for our different dulcimer models. You can also download a step by step diagram – How to String Your Dulcimer.
- Don't wait for strings to break or sound so dull you won't enjoy playing. Even if you don't play very often, you should change your strings at least twice a year.
- Shut down your dulcimer when not in use, but avoid exposing the strings to high humidity or temperature changes. The tuners may require some tensioning to compensate for environmental changes and/or wear. Use care when you tune, as the finish may be damaged if you hold the string tension, but not so much that it is not functional. If you are unsure, consult a professional.
- Proper adjustment of the tuning machines is important if they are to function well.