

FINAL TOUCHES AND PREPPING FOR FINISHING



13-3 Rounding edges with smooth rattail file



13-4 Binding edges sanded smooth

AFTER COMPLETING CONSTRUCTION, you will need to go over the instrument thoroughly, looking for any gaps or voids that should be filled in accordingly with stick shellac, epoxy, or cyanoacrylate glue. Cyanoacrylate glue is sold in a few different viscosities and works well to fill small gaps and surface imperfections because it dries hard and clear, which allows it to be finished over virtually without detection.

The edges of the bindings should be rounded over to create both a finished look and a soft surface for the arm to rest on while playing. Round the edges over with a smooth rattail file, being careful not to mar either the top or back surface, and sand smooth (13-3 and 13-4).

Sanding the Surface

The entire surface should be sanded up to 320- or 400-grit sandpaper. When sanding a surface for finishing, begin with 150 or 180 grit and let the coarser-grit paper do most of the work. The higher grits should be used to remove the scratch marks left by the coarser-grit papers. When prepping for finishing, always sand with the grain. Cross-grain scratches will be visible through the finish and are difficult to remove (13-5 and 13-6).

Shades of Shellac

There are a number of different shades of shellac available such as Blonde, Kusmi, Amber, and Garnet, but since the top on this guitar is cedar, Super Blonde will be used, because this shellac alters the true color of the wood the least. All the other colors will tend to darken the original color of the wood. As this guitar has plenty of natural color, there is no need to enhance anything; therefore, Super Blonde shellac will work the best, providing the most natural-looking color. The shellac will be used for the sealing wash coat here, and later to French-polish the top, is prepared by mixing 21 grams of shellac flakes in 150 ml of alcohol. Let the flakes dissolve overnight, occasionally stirring to assist the process.



13-6 Sanding the headpiece



13-5 Sanding the surface