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Nechville Musical Products
9700 Humboldt Avenue South
Bloomington Minnesota 55431**

Nechville Musical Products

Dear Atlas Player -

Since 1980s, my goal has been to present the world's best banjos. Now the Atlas blends the best banjo technology from the past 150 years into a work of timeless craftsmanship.

Your beautiful Atlas openback banjo is the result of a team effort between expert craftsman Wayne Sagmoen and Tom Nechville. Wayne is known for his historically creative banjo designs. Reminiscent of the Ashborn banjos of the 1860s, the Sagmoen pot features block-style construction with a built-in wooden flange. The wood flange reduces metal parts and provides a smoother, more natural appearance, while making the banjo more comfortable to hold.

The Nechville-Sagmoen collaborative Atlas is Nechville Musical Products' first Hybrid banjo, combining a conventional pot with a Nechville neck gaining full adjustability and ease of use.

- Tom Nechville

Date of Purchase:

Atlas Serial Number:

Notes

Nechville Musical Products

Home of the Heli-Mount

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Atlas Deluxe Specifications

Minnesota Black Walnut neck

11" or 12" walnut Block style pot

Radius Ebony fingerboard with Saturn and Star inlay

Hand-rubbed natural oil finish

Handy Thumb scoop leaving access to all the banjo's highest notes.

Removable dowel stick

Renaissance head

Exotic tone-wood integral tone ring

Nechville Inline 5 way adjustable Tailpiece.

Nechville Enterprise compensated bridge

Heavy duty hard shell case

Exclusive Flux Capacitor Neck mounting

Atlas STD

Minnesota Black Walnut neck

11" or 12" walnut Block style pot

lat Ebony fingerboard with Saturn and Star inlay

Hand-rubbed natural oil finish

Thumb scoop leaving access to all the banjo's highest notes.

Removable dowel stick

Renaissance head

Exotic tonewood integral tone ring

Nechville Inline 5 way adjustable Tailpiece.

Nechville Enterprise compensated bridge

Exclusive Flux Capacitor Neck mounting

Deluxe gig bag

Atlas Warrantee

The Atlas is guaranteed against defects in workmanship to the original owner for 5 years from purchase date. Warrantee does not cover fret and finish wear, Head, strings or bridges, but Nechville will replace defective parts and cover labor cost on covered repairs. Customer is responsible for all shipping costs to and from factory. Case warrantee is for one year only and is limited to the replacement value of the case.

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Parts of the Atlas Banjo

- 1 Peghead
- 2 Tuning Pegs
- 3 Truss Rod Cover
- 4 Nut
- 5 Radiused Fingerboard
- 6 5th String Tuner
- 7 Flux Capacitor© Radiused Neck Mount
- 8 Renaissance Head
- 9 Block Walnut Body
- 10 Compensated Bridge
- 11 Comfort Bevel© Armrest
- 12 IN– Line Tailpiece
- 13 Removable Dowel Stick (see back)

II. Storage

It is suggested that your banjo be stored in its case when not in use. This is to avoid the potential exposure of extremes in temperature and humidity. Cases protect from these sudden changes by slowly graduating any climatic change. Increased humidity swells and expands wood, while dry periods cause shrinkage.

Try to keep your instrument within temperature ranges of 60 to 80 degrees, and 35 to 60 percent humidity. Pay attention to weather reports forecasting sudden changes in humidity and dry periods.

III. Travel

When traveling, always keep your Atlas banjo in its case or other protective carry bag. If traveling by car, cover your case with a blanket to avoid its exposure to direct sunlight and sudden temperature changes. Do not store it in the trunk during sunlit days. If traveling to dry areas, it may be wise to purchase a case humidifier.

Air Travel

If you are going to travel by plane, it is best to have a hard shell case. When making reservations, ask about insurance and if special arrangements can be made to carry your banjo on the plane with you. Often times the banjo will fit in the overhead compartment, and it is good to keep in mind that in many cases flight attendants will provide tailored assistance for you. Another advantage of the Atlas is its unique ability to remove its neck from the body assembly. Then the neck and body can be separately wrapped and protectively stored in suitcases or easily carried on board in protective handbags.

Caring for Your Atlas

I. Cleaning and Treating

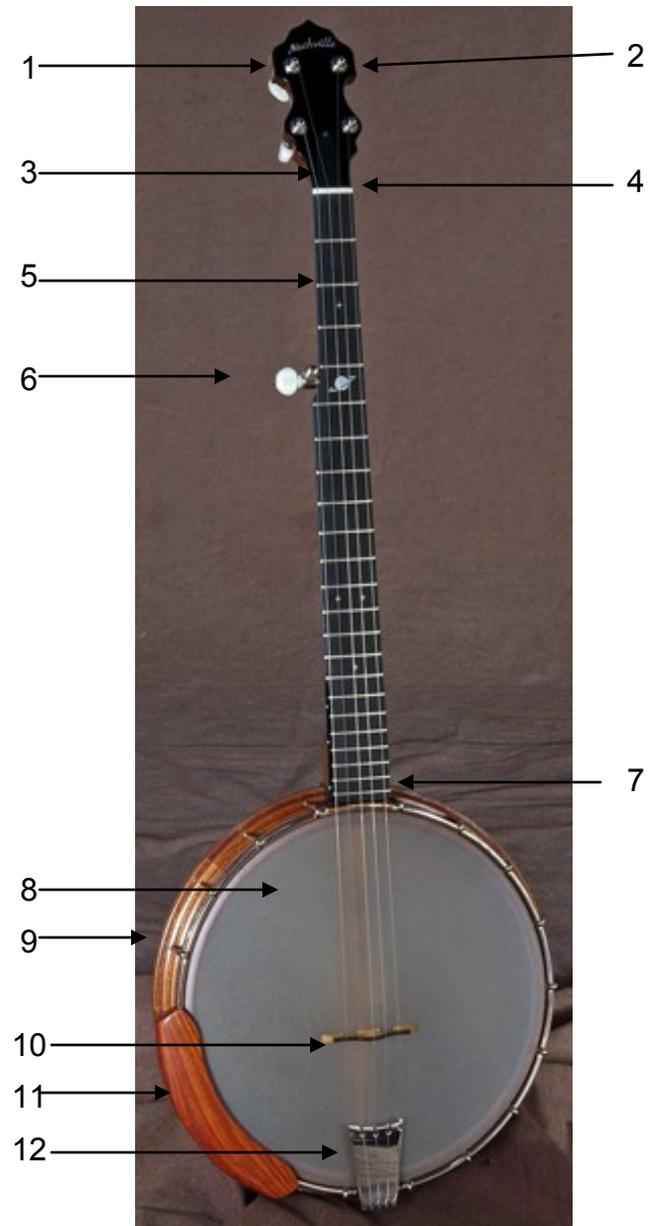
(Note: Wood parts should be wiped off after playing to insure lasting beauty. Metal parts need only occasional dusting.)

The head can be cleaned with any mild household cleaner such as 409. You can even use a scrub pad on tough stains, but take care not to scratch any wood or metal parts.

The fingerboard should be cleaned and moisturized with lemon or orange scented mineral oil at least once a year, preferably in the late fall. It will not harm the fingerboard or frets to use 0000 super fine steel wool to clean and polish fingerboard and frets prior to applying oil.

The finish on the neck and pot can be cleaned and buffed with a non-abrasive cotton cloth and plain water. Small scratches can be polished out with a bit of automotive rubbing compound and a cotton cloth. Polish until the finish is smooth.

Metal parts may be plated, so it is important not to use abrasive polishes. You can use "Never Dull" non-abrasive cotton wadding to polish any nickel plated parts intended to shine. It leaves a protective film that allows you to simply buff periodically with a clean cotton cloth.



Introduction to the Atlas Banjo

Your beautiful **Atlas** banjo is a joint effort between Nechville Musical Products and Wayne Sagmoen Banjos. Sagmoen is known for expert craftsmanship and creative openback banjo designs. Reminiscent of the Ashborn Banjos of the 1860's, Sagmoen pots feature block-style construction with a built-in wooden flange. The wood flange reduces metal part requirements and provides a smoother, more natural appearance, while making the banjo more comfortable to hold.

The Nechville-Sagmoen collaboration has yielded a stunning result, and the **Atlas** is the first in Nechville Musical Products' line of Hybrid banjos. It has a conventional Sagmoen pot and a Nechville neck assembly, with full adjustability and ease of use.

Big sound is not enough to describe the tone of the **Atlas** banjo, and fullness is an understatement. Depth, resonance, and sustain take on new musical meaning as you begin communicating through your musical **Atlas**.

Nechville has carefully selected, cut, and crafted aged timber blocks into an artful and tonally superior banjo body. The resulting 11" or 12" body is capped with exotic hard tone wood, imparting a dark and warm timbre to this banjo's sound. We have chosen a Renaissance head for an organic, mellow, responsive tone.

tion. If the neck is improperly bowed, see "Truss Rod Adjustment." If the bow is adequate but the action is too low, carefully turn the body over and place it in your lap. Use a 5/32 inch Allen wrench to slightly loosen the neck interface for adjustment. Hold the neck in the desired position and lock it into place by retightening the Allen screw.

IV. Off Pitch

If your banjo is off pitch when played up the neck, follow the steps in the "Bridge Placement" section. If your banjo is not equipped with a Nechville Enterprise compensated bridge, procuring one would help overall intonation. Also, make sure the neck is not overly bowed see "Truss Rod Adjustment."

V. Bridge Check

To check the bridge, use the "chimes" technique described in the "Bridge Placement" section. First lightly depress the 3rd string above the 12th fret while plucking. Next play the string again while fretting the 12th fret just behind the fret wire. If these two notes are exactly the same, your bridge is set correctly.

VI. Rough or Protruding Fret Edges

During extreme dry spells, the neck wood may shrink, leaving uncomfortable fret ends protruding. Consult a qualified repair person to file and polish the fret ends while the weather is still dry.

Troubleshooting

I. Loose Neck

If there is any play in the Atlas neck, follow the directions in the "Neck Adjustment" section. Before attempting to adjust the neck, first test the action by measuring the clearance between the top of the 22nd fret and the bottom of the string. Low action is around a 1/8 inch gap. Any less is too low.

(Note: If the Allen screw goes in all the way and the neck is still loose, the neck should be removed and the anvil in the plunger will need to be screwed exactly one turn in with the 5/32 inch Allen wrench. If the neck is still loose, it is suggested that the entire plunger be tightened to its mounting bolt. Do not tighten the plunger so far as to make it immovable.)

II. Buzzes

If there are any buzzes during hard picking, hammer-ons, or pull-offs, your action is too low. Follow the steps in the "Neck Adjustment" section. It is common for necks to straighten out or even back bow when moved to more humid climates, so it is important to have an understanding of proper neck bow and angle. Very rarely you may encounter a high or low fret as the source of your problem. Have frets examined by a qualified luthier for dressing or possible replacement.

III. Action Check

Follow the procedures in the "Neck Adjustment" sec-

Completing this unique banjo is a lovely removable dowel stick that you can use for holding a pickup or for tone-altering inserts.

As if the **Atlas'** easy playability of the radiused neck and the rich, resonant tone were not enough, you will find yourself experiencing a level of comfort you didn't know was possible.

The Comfort Bevel[®] wooden armrest on the **Atlas** gives you many more hours of tireless playing. You'll also love our exclusive thumb scoop, giving access to that sweet spot without loss of fretting playability.

Our Nechville Tailpiece, neck and body system are so solid that you'll have no trouble keeping your new Atlas in tune.

We've sent the **Atlas** over the top with Nechville's incredible adjustable neck, leaving all other openback banjos behind. You can take your banjo anywhere by simply disengaging the neck and carrying both parts in a carry-along bag or suitcase. It only takes a moment to pop the neck and tailpiece back on when you're ready to unpack and play, and you have the further benefit of choosing the optimum playing action for your own style.

Nechville uses the finest components and issues a **Five Year Warranty** with every Atlas creation. We are confident that you will love your **Atlas!**

Maintenance of Your Atlas Banjo

I. Adjusting the Banjo's Head Tension

With the 5/16" socket wrench provided, (other 5/16" sockets should also work) Check that all nuts are evenly snug, and none are loose. For a brighter, louder sound, Tighten each nut successively about 1/4 turn. Then recheck the tone. The head should be tightened, keeping the tension hoop parallel and even to the head. There is no need to tighten in any special sequence as long as each nut is gradually and methodically turned. The important part is that the head not become over stretched so that the top of the tension hoop pulls down lower than the top of the tone ring and head surface. In this case, it's time for a new head, or possibly a lower crown head. The Atlas delivers its best Old time tone with the head moderately tight. Over tightening can result in damage and brittle tone. Note also that the proper mounting of the Comfort Bevel armrest depends on the head not being over tight. The tension hoop must be higher than the head's surface to hold the armrest on properly.

II. Bridge Placement

It is very important that you have installed the correct bridge for your Atlas banjo. Your Atlas features a **Nechville Enterprise Bridge**, the only banjo bridge that is weighed, radiused, and compensated for optimal playability. The Enterprise Bridge comes in all sizes between 9/16" and 7/8". For best results, use only the compensated Enterprise Bridge (available from Nechville Musical Products).

VI. Two-Way Stainless Truss Rod Adjustment

The truss rod is used for adjusting the amount of bow in the playing surface of a neck. A properly adjusted neck should not be back bowed or even perfectly flat. For clean tone it is best to have a small amount of forward bow.

If you have tried neck action adjustments and the action is still impeded by an improper neck bend, carefully follow the steps below. (If you are not comfortable with truss rod adjustments, it is suggested that you take your Atlas to a reputable repair shop.)

1. Test the truss rod setting by placing a capo just above the 1st fret, while holding the string down at the 22nd fret and measuring the clearance between the top of the 7th fret and the bottom of the string. The clearance should be approximately the thickness of a business card. (Remember that overall Atlas string action adjustments are done at the Flux Capacitor neck interface.)
2. Remove the truss rod cover and mark a line on the truss rod nut. This is to give a point of reference from its original position.
3. Carefully set your banjo on a sturdy padded surface, with the peghead facing toward you and the neck facing away. Take a 1/4 inch deep socket wrench or nut driver and engage the truss rod nut. Turn the nut only slightly, about 1/8 to 1/4 of a turn. Again test the truss rod setting, and do so with each successive turn. It is also possible to view down the edge of the fingerboard and actually see the amount of bow changing.

Before attempting to adjust the neck, first make sure that the head is tight, and then test the action by measuring the clearance between the top of the 12th fret and the bottom of the string. Low action is around a 1/8 inch gap. Any less is too low. (Note: Remember that tightening the head raises the action slightly, and so does loosening the truss rod. See Section VI.)

If you want to raise the action, carefully turn the body over and place it in your lap. Use a 5/32 inch Allen wrench to loosen the neck's quick Cam interface adjustment. Hold the neck in the desired position, and lock it in place by retightening the Allen screw.

Important Note: If the Allen screw goes in all the way and the neck is still loose, the neck should be removed and the anvil in the plunger will need to be screwed exactly one turn in, with the 5/32 inch Allen wrench.

If you want to lower the action, you must first loosen the strings slightly before following the procedure described above

If you wish to remove the neck, simply remove the tailpiece, back out the 5/32" Allen screw about 1/4 inch, and pull the neck free from its anvil and plunger mounting assembly. (Note: The plunger should not be tightly fastened to the mounting bolt in order to allow for neck adjustment.)

For a visual demonstration of the above procedure, watch the video entitled "Nechville Neck Connection" online at www.nechville.com or *You Tube*.

It is best to have a little more height in the center of the bridge for the best playability and the least string noise. It is also preferable to use the tallest bridge you find comfortable to play, but your bridge should be under 3 grams in weight for normal sound.

It is crucial that the bridge placement be correct in order to obtain the best performance from your banjo. With the standard 26.3/8" Nechville scale length, the bridge should be placed 13 3/16" down from the 12th fret on the head. With the Short scale option of 25.5" this measurement is 12.3/4". Be sure the 3rd string compensation notch or concave portion is facing the neck.

To fine-tune the bridge setting, use a harmonic technique called "chimes. Step 1) Lightly touch the 3rd string above the 19th fret while plucking. This clear ringing sound is called "chimes." Step 2) Play the string again while fretting the 19th fret just behind the fret wire. If these two notes are exactly the same, your bridge is set correctly.

If the fretted note (Step 1 above) is higher than the harmonic note (Step 2), move the bridge slightly toward the tailpiece. If the fretted note is lower than the harmonic note, move the bridge slightly away from the tailpiece. In each case, repeat steps 1 and 2 until both notes are exactly the same.

Once the proper bridge location is found, it is suggested that you lightly mark the bridge position on the head with a pencil. This is to insure the proper setting of the bridge in the event that it is knocked out of place.

III. String Replacement

(Note: To insure that bridge placement is not disturbed, it is suggested that string replacement be done one string at a time.)

1. After removing the first string, you may rub some pencil lead into the slot of the nut, allowing the string to slide more easily into tune.
2. After running the string through the tailpiece and over the bridge and nut, pass the string through the peg hole from the center of the peghead toward the outside.
3. Leaving a little slack in string length, kink the free end of the string in the opposite direction (forming a figure "S" or a reverse "S.") Pass the free end under the existing string length and pull it up, trapping it between the string and the tuner post.
4. Remove any slack by pulling on each section of the string, turn tuner knob until slack is taken up. Make sure the strings come off the inner side of the tuner post 5. Repeat above process with remaining strings.

IV. Tailpiece Adjustment

The Nechville Tailpiece comes adjusted for your Atlas banjo from the factory. If desired, the two small mounting Allen screws can be readjusted to angle the tailpiece from side to side, centering the strings slightly toward either side of the neck.

Tighten right screw to orient the tailpiece toward the right. Tightening the left screw angles the tailpiece to the left. The larger screw in the end of the tailpiece is the break angle adjustment screw. Putting pressure on this screw lowers the tailpiece, increasing the break angle and generally brightening the sound. Your Atlas also works well with this screw completely removed for a natural open tone. Most players prefer only slight tension on this screw.

Tightening Both small set screws equally will move the tailpiece away from the bridge and lends slightly less break angle leading to fullness of sound. You'll also want to snug up the larger Allen screw to avoid rattling of the loose screw.

V. Neck Adjustment (Action Adjustment)

The central coupling mechanism between your Atlas's modern Nechville neck and its historic Sagamoen pot design is called the **Nechville Flux Capacitor**.

It has long been a problem with traditional banjos that they are not adjustable in terms of angle and resulting string height, or "action". Your Atlas neck has an exclusive Flux Capacitor mounting system giving you infinite adjustability in the height of your strings in order to accommodate any style of play and all bridge heights.

There is a radiused interface between the end of the Atlas' neck and the attachment surface of the Flux Capacitor. A single Allen screw located in the heel of the neck locks the neck's angle when tightened, producing a solid and stable, yet adjustable neck mount.