

Adapting Full Length Orchestra Strings to the NXT5 Bass

Chris Berry 2025-02



In a previous article I tried out orchestra strings on the NXT5 bass by cutting the afterlength, installing crimp loops on the ends, and preparing the tuner ends of an old set of Helicore mediums plus a Thomastik Low C. The improvement in the sound was dramatic. The task detailed here is the mounting of a full length set of used Corelli 370 Forte TX plus a Thomastik low C without modifying the afterlength. I tried the Helicores through the slots in the back plate as recommended but heard a loud reverberation. The plate was clanging like a bell! In order for this to work I needed to add more than a little muting. The photos below show how this was done on my bass.

Step 1: Mute the back plate at the body. Be careful not to strain the wire to the jack. Felt with double-sided tape (carpet tape) was added to the rim of the back cavity. This felt is from my late father who collected materials for his many engineering interests. The installed plate was pretty dead at this point.



1.1 Felt for the back plate.

Step 2: Make and mount a mute after the holes in the back late. Mine is furniture pad felt with an adhesive backing, about 2-3/4 x 3-3/4". This did a good job of muting the afterlengths.



2.1 Felt pad for the afterlengths.

Step 3: Prepare tuner ends of the strings. The stock tuners, similar to Gotoh GB7's, have small shafts and a hole that is about 0.089". They are no match for an orchestral B string. The G, D, and A strings are small enough to work. It may help the A string to scrape or burn off some of the thread. Use a knife or soldering iron. I cut the tuner ends of all the strings at 5" from the center of the tuner shaft. Be sure to measure from the correct tuner! Mark this distance with a felt marker to simplify this. The E and B strings have to have some windings removed. This is easiest to do while the string is still straight. If so the windings can be pulled off the end of the string. For the E string try removing the outer wrap for 5" and holding the remainder with a piece of tape. Remove at least one of the next wraps. Add heat shrink tubing which slightly overlaps the 2nd wrap. This can also be done with nylon thread or similar. The B string will require the outer wrap and two inner ones to be removed for 5". Secure as above.



Tuner end of strings with windings removed and secured with heat shrink tubing.

Many thanks to Greg Kreinsen ("the parts guy") at NSD for his help and advice. I love that I now have a wider choice of strings to use with my NXT5. Like so many of us, I will probably just end up buying the NXT5 Traditional set!