

# LA VOCE

OF CLAIRE GIVENS VIOLINS, INC.



FALL 2001

## Cremona Comes to Minneapolis October 27-November 10

Since 1550, the city of Cremona, Italy has been the home to the greatest of all the Italian violinmakers. Cremona was the birthplace of the Amatis, Stradivari, Bergonzi, Guarneri del Gesu, Ceruti and Storioni. The vibrant cultural life of the city supplied the solid foundation that these makers needed to develop the violin. Over the years, Cremona produced great artists, musicians and scientists, all of whom have had their impact on the evolution of the violin family since its invention. This influence of Cremonese culture on the evolution of the violin continues today, and ensures that Cremona is one of the world's leading centers of violin development.

To celebrate Cremona's current achievements in violin making, Givens Violins is holding a special **Cremona Violinmaking Exhibition of 50 contemporary Cremonese violins, violas and cellos.** This unique event showcases a diverse selection of instruments from the most established contemporary professional violinmakers of Cremona. These instruments will be on display and available for acquisition at special exhibition-only prices. **The exhibition dates are from Saturday, October 27 to November 10, 2001.**

The exhibition and sale represent a rare opportunity to try many violins from the best of the Cremonese makers, collected together in one location. Givens Violins is the sole location for this exhibition in the Great Lakes' states. Since we are the second city on the exhibition's tour of North America, we will have the broadest possible choice of instruments available for purchase. The organizer of this exhibition is Musafia North America, also known as a maker of premium cases.

Some of the makers included are: Marco Noll, Alessandra Pedota, Mathis Heyligers & Rael le Cointe, Luca Salvadori, Daniele Scolari, Maurizio Tadioli & Michele Buccellé, Daniele Tonarelli,



Stefano Conia Violin, Cremona 1988

Francesco Toto, Stefano Trabucchi, Marcello and Vittorio Villa, Sandro Asinari, Eric Blot, Alessandro Commendulli, Stefano Conia Jr, Alberto Denti, Luca Maria Gallo, Robert Gasser, Marco Maria Gastaldi, Eduardo Gorr, and Giorgio Grisales amongst others.

**During the Cremona Violin Making exhibit we will also be presenting our own exhibit of Italian instruments dating back to 1762.** This will have a special emphasis on instruments by the best of the 20th Century makers. You may play any instrument from either exhibition and all instruments will be available for purchase until November 10th. Makers included in this auxiliary exhibit are J.B. Guadagnini, C.A. Testore, Giacomo Zanoli, Ventapane, Fagnola, Oddone, Antoniazzi, Pollastri, Marchettei, Parravicini, Candi, Bellarosa, Bissolotti, Maggiali.

**Private view:** Givens Violins is having a special Open House from 10:00 AM to 8:00 PM on the first day of the exhibit, Saturday, October 27. All violins will be available to try. Watch our web page, [givensviolins.com](http://givensviolins.com) for more details.

# Givens Staff Travels to Washington, DC

We work in a fascinating business that includes not only great music and wonderful musicians but also the fruits of 400 years of the history of violinmaking. It is often difficult while in the swirl of day-to-day business to find the time to study the great makers and their work. So, we took four days this summer to travel to Washington DC and study some of the finest violins in existence owned by the federal government and cared for by the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian Institute.

The entire staff of Givens Violins plus two spouses and a friend made the trip. We left work on Saturday, July 21 and returned the following Tuesday evening. Sunday was a free day for individual touring. Monday morning, Carol Ward-Bamford of the Library of Congress opened the doors of the sealed and humidity controlled new display cases in the Whithall Pavilion and allowed us all the time we needed to enjoy the seven fine Cremonese instruments in their collection. Among the instruments in the collection are Fritz Kreisler's 1733 Guarneri del Gesu, the "Betts" Stradivari of 1704, the "Brookings" Nicolo Amati, 1654 and a quartet of Tourte bows. All are superb examples of the various makers' works.

Tuesday, Gary Sturm of the Smithsonian brought us feast after feast of exceptional instruments and bows to study. In the morning we limited ourselves to Guadagnini's and Amati family's work and in the



Doug Lay and Frank Davis at the Library of Congress

afternoon we were able to view the four decorated Stradivari violins; the 1677 Sunrise, the 1679 Hellier, the 1687 Ole Bull plus the 1709 Greffuhle. It is impossible to describe the splendor of each of these instruments, but to be able to see all four at once was an experience none of us will forget.

Givens Violins was pleased to be able to fund this trip and to give all of us an opportunity to understand further the breadth of the history of violinmaking.



Givens staff at the Library of Congress : Front Row L to R: Theodora Wynhoff, Ute Zahn, Frank Davis, Claire Givens, Bill Babcock. Back Row L to R: John Vierow, John Curtis, Doug Lay, Shannon Frid. Photographer, Andrew Dipper. (Note our Museum friendly white gloves.)

# New Givens Violins Website

Claire Givens Violins, Inc. is proud to announce the launch of our new website, [www.givensviolins.com](http://www.givensviolins.com). In addition to a new look, the site now includes **real-time inventory search capability** and special “back-stage support” pages for Parents, Professionals, Students and Teachers.

Key features of the new site include new information about our services; step by step on how to audition instruments and bows; frequently asked questions; links to Musical Instrument Insurance Companies, Institutions & Societies and Performance Groups; various articles including a Topic of the Month; Search Request and Request to Sell E-Forms; Dipper Workshop Inventory; and pictures and descriptions of Exceptional Instruments.

For more information, call 800.279.4323 or visit [www.givensviolins.com](http://www.givensviolins.com).



## News of Note

Every year Claire Givens Violins sponsors a prize for the Young People's Symphony Concert Association Competition. Held annually, this is one of the most important competitions for young players in the Upper Midwest. This year's winner of the Givens Prize is **Nicole Swanson**, viola student of Korey Konkell.

The winner of the Minnesota Sinfonia's 2001 Young Artist Competition Senior Division Prize was **Natalie Van Burkleo**. This prize is also sponsored by Givens Violins.

Our own Claire Givens appears in the last 10 minutes of Part 1 of the Madison, WI edition of Antiques Roadshow. Her appearance documents an appraisal of an 1875 Hardanger Fiddle by Eilev Jonson of Norway.

## Strad Magazine News

The June 2001 issue includes an “In focus” article written by Claire Givens about a viola by Mathias Dahl, Minneapolis 1969. Dahl was a significant and accomplished maker from this area and this was the first *Strad* article written about him.

Claire also was asked to write the review of the *British Violin*, a beautifully researched and designed book about the history of British violin and bow making. See February, 2001.

Watch for a feature article about our own Andrew Dipper. Editor, Joanna Pieters, spent a day this summer interviewing him and viewing his work.

## New Accessories

**RIBONI VIOLIN CASES:** Givens Violins is one of the few shops in the United States offering Riboni violin cases. These cases are made in Cremona, Italy and are beautifully constructed using the finest materials available. They differ from the traditional rectangular case in that the corners have been slightly rounded off, making the case more compact and extremely elegant. The interiors are finished in a variety of exceptional fabrics, including a padded silk blanket and a padded shoulder strap.

**MICROFIBER CLEANING CLOTHS:** Givens Violins now offers a microfiber cleaning cloths. These cloths are state-of-the-art in their ability to pick up loose rosin and other particles from your instrument. The fibers that make up the cloth are 0.050 denier (less than 1/100 the thickness of a human hair). This micro size combined with the shape of the fibers imbue the cloths with a truly unique cleaning ability. Only \$4.

**INFELD RED AND BLUE VIOLIN STRINGS:** Givens Violins is now carrying the new *Infeld Red and Blue* violin strings. These strings allow players to achieve a warm sound (Red) or a more brilliant sound (Blue) while maintaining a nicely balanced quality and a high degree of playability. The new *Eva Pirazzi* strings are also available. These strings are characterized by an elegant, refined sound with tremendous power and projection.

**STRETTO HUMIDIFYING SYSTEM:** Givens Violins now offers the Stretto humidifying system. This unit mounts in the case using velcro, eliminating the need for humidification inside the instrument. The humidification lasts approximately two weeks before needing to be remoistened, making it more worry free on a day to day basis.

CLAIRE GIVENS VIOLINS, INC.  
1004 MARQUETTE AVENUE, SUITE 205  
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55403

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# Cremona Violin-making Exhibition

October 27–November 10

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*For more than 20 years*  
**Claire Givens Violins, Inc.**  
*has been providing*

- A complete line of instruments, bows and services for intermediate to professional string players.
- Workshops staffed by professionally trained and experienced violin and bow makers, providing repairs and restoration of the highest quality.
- A complete on-hand inventory of accessories.
- Specialized assistance to families and teachers of string instrument players.
- Nationwide and international shipping service.

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HOURS: Tuesday - Saturday 10:00-5:30  
800.279.4323 • 612.375.0708  
cgivens@givensviolins.com  
www.givensviolins.com

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*LaVoce is the newsletter of Claire Givens Violins, Inc., Dealers, Makers and Restorers of Fine Violins, Violas, Cellos and Bows. It is part of a concerted and continuing commitment to keep our customers informed. LaVoce is published periodically.*

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## Wine and Cellos

*TESTORE AND LEOVILLE-BARTON*

The cello from the workshop of Carlo Antonio Testore, c.1750, that we are currently offering, has a rich and explosive low end, with a depth and complexity associated with a well-maintained Milanese instrument of this age. The power is even across the range of the instrument, with a sweet, clear A string.

A marvelous accompaniment to this instrument would be the 1982 Leoville-Barton St. Julien. 1982 was a hot, ripe year in Bordeaux, producing massive, powerful wines. While exhibiting the characteristics of the vintage, the Leoville-Barton also maintains a much more classic Bordeaux structure, lending it balance and proportion. It is just now approaching maturity, gaining the bottle bouquet and complexity that only come with years of cellaring.

The Testore and Leoville-Barton would go perfectly with a rare roast of beef, or a slow-cooked pork shoulder.

*By John Curtis, bookkeeper and wine enthusiast.*