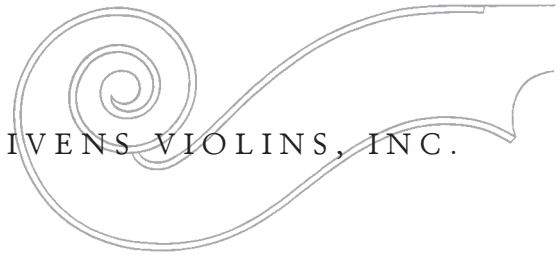


# LA VOCE

OF CLAIRE GIVENS VIOLINS, INC.



SPRING 2005

## La Voce: our voice

By Claire Givens

Over the years Givens Violins has formed extensive business connections worldwide and uses these to find the best possible instruments and bows for our customers in this region and nationally. In this issue of *La Voce* Andrew Dipper gives us his very personal tour of some of these violins and his connection with the makers. It is called "The Inside Scoop" and he reviews violins \$10,000 to \$20,000.

I also want to draw your attention to a true national treasure, The National Music Museum: America's Shrine to Music. It holds the finest and most complete collections of musical instruments of any museum in the world. I am helping them plan a groundbreaking conference on the Cremona Makers whose lives span the years 1505-1744. It is taking place this July in Vermillion, South Dakota.

I so firmly believe that this Museum is worthy of your attention and support that I'm offering the first 100 people who become Members an upgrade to the Donor level – a \$15 contribution. Just mention the "LaVoce" offer.

I hope you enjoy this issue of LaVoce. Please contact us with your comments: [www.givensviolins.com](http://www.givensviolins.com)

## The Inside Scoop on Violins

**\$10,000-20,000**

By Andrew Dipper

### **Iginio Sderci, Florence 1958**

Considered among the best of the modern Italian makers, he worked for Leandro Bisiach, Sr. in Milan. He completed more than 420 instruments in his career, including some very fine violas, and won gold medals at the Stradivari Exhibition in Cremona in 1937. He is known for the maturity and precision of his work. Our violin is a wonderful example of his craftsmanship and has a clear and brilliant tone with a nice bite and good solo characteristics.

### **Silvio Verzi Paoletti, Florence c. 1930**

A gem of a violin, resplendent in quality, both in workmanship and sound. It has excellent projection and a



Violin by Luigi Mozzani, Cento 1917

rich and balanced tone. Paoletti studied with De Zorzi in Florence and set up his own shop there in 1925. This violin has artistry in all its details.

### **Mario Gadda, Mantua 1980**

Stefano Scarpella was the teacher of Mario's father. He was a great copyist who, like Guadagnini, achieved a true style of his own even in his finest copies of other makers' work. His best violins can have great purity of sound and openness of tone. Our instrument has all of these characteristics combined with a certain amount of bad boy attitude that you can mold to your own needs.

### **Luigi Mozzani, Cento 1917**

Originally a guitarist, Mozzani started a school of instrument making in 1915 at Cento, in the foothills of the Apennine mountains between Bologna and Ferrara. The school employed upwards of ten instrument makers, including luthiers such as Natale Carletti and Orsolo Gotti. Cento was one of the birthplaces of the Italian auto industry and now hosts companies like Ferrari and Lamborghini. In true form to its native land this violin has a wide range of dynamic possibilities with power and response to die for.

### **Riccardo Bergonzi, Cremona 2004**

A great maker from a great family, Riccardo had artistry running in his veins from the very start and his work was even notable while he was a pupil at the International School of Violin Making in Cremona in the 1970's. He took advantage of being surrounded by some of the

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Claire Givens and Andrew Dipper at ASTA's National Conference, February 2005: They appear in their 1700's Venetian Ball attire for the costumed opening celebration.

## NEWS

◆ Our Workshop Manager, Doug Lay, was published in the February 2005 edition of "The Strad" magazine. His excellent article, entitled *Cold Comfort*, covers the effects of weather on instruments and offers practical tips for safeguarding them.

◆ Andrew Dipper will also be published in "The Strad" magazine with a groundbreaking article on the origins of the violin and the part played by the dance and court ballets in the development of the instrument. This is a very difficult area of research and Andrew's knowledge of French and Italian has yielded lots of interesting source material, especially concerning the first use of Cremonese violins at the Valois court of France between 1554 and 1600.

◆ Last October marked another successful Cremona Exhibition here at Givens Violins. String players from all over the United States came in to try the fine modern Cremonese instruments, contemporary bows, and historic Italian instruments. We have always been very pleased with the quality of the contemporary instruments; however, we thought that there were some truly exceptional specimens this year. We acquired a number of instruments that we felt were absolutely outstanding by **Carlo Bergonzi**, **Alessandra Pedota**, **Barbara Picinotti**, **Loual Riebel**, and **Francesco Toto**. Watch our website, [www.givensviolins.com](http://www.givensviolins.com), for this year's exhibit dates.

◆ We regret that John Vierow's name and signature did not appear on our annual holiday card. Indeed, he is still our resident bow expert. Look forward to an article from him in our next newsletter.

greatest of the Italian Luthiers, such as Francesco Bisoletti, Giorgio Scolari and Giobattista Morassi. Riccardo searched for and found the spirit of the great Italian makers and made it live again through his work. Our violin has fabulous tone color and is melodious and balanced in the great Cremonese tradition.

### **Janos Spiegel, Budapest 1907**

Why do I always think of gypsy music and Liszt when I think of Budapest? Some of the finest violins in the world outside of Italy came from Hungary. The Hungarian makers had access to the best wood and plenty of very fine and uncompromising musicians to act as guides to the design and conception of their violins. Our violin has narrow upper bouts that make it extremely comfortable to play, its response is easy and its tone is full and rich.

### **Antonio Capela, Espinho, Portugal 1973**

I met Antonio in Cremona in 1975 and was immediately impressed by his depth of knowledge of the Cremonese school and by the standards that he applied to his own work. He uses the finest wood and a wonderful essential oil vanish that brings out the best qualities of the material. The tone of our violin is smooth and perfectly even. It blends beautifully with other instruments, making it a wonderful instrument for quartet playing.

### **Jonathan Cooper, Gorham, Maine 2004**

Jonathan studied in Cremona and used the time very wisely to understand some of the deepest and darkest secrets of the Cremonese violin making tradition. Jonathan is a very fine violinist himself and this has made his instruments perfectly suited to working musicians. His instruments have a maturity that makes them seem as if they had just stepped out of Italy for a holiday on Broadway- big and buttery with a deep robust sound.

### **Barbara Piccinotti, Cremona 2004**

There is a sense with the best Cremona makers that they have absorbed some indefinable essence of the place and made it take on a life of its own in their work. Perhaps it is the influence of Monteverdi or Visconti, Tartini or Ponchielli, or Mozart (who said "*In Cremona, the orchestra is good, and Spagnoletta is the name of the first violinist here. Prima donna very passable—rather ancient, I fancy*"). Cremona, though, seems to bring out the best in any luthier and requires that, at the very least, they draw their direct inspiration from the great makers of the past. Barbara's instrument has a sweet and open tone coupled with excellent projection that makes it an excellent instrument for a serious and aspiring player.

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**David Wiebe, David City Nebraska 1983**

I remember going to visit David one very hot summer day when the cottonwoods were letting loose their cotton into the air and the crickets were chirping in the dry grass, which brought back memories of a visit that I made to Ravenna in 1968. We talked for over four hours about violin design and the importance of varnish ground coats, how to make them and the effects that they had on the tone of the violin. David makes fine instruments in a precise and informed style which has brought him recognition as one of the foremost of the modern American makers. His violin has a striking, colorful tone that rings. Think of Copeland and the great American composers.

**Raymond Joseph Melanson, Rochester, MA 2001**

Ray has really cooked up some fine instruments. He has the ability to take the ingredients from all of the best makers and reassemble them into another equally fine but new concept of a violin. He is a good luthier, in the sense that he knows how musicians need to use and work with his violins. He makes them like fine tools to achieve what is necessary. His violin has a clear sparkling tone with depth of character and it projects well.

**William Whedbee, Chicago 2001**

Will always liked the hat that I wore in Cremona and one day visiting Chicago nearly seventeen years later I made a present of it to him. He is a great Cajun fiddle player and seems to have injected the Zydeco spirit into his violins. They have nobility without being pretentious and a certain inner beauty that comes from his superb wood choice combined with fabulous varnish. His violin has a great, dark, pure and resounding tone.

**Ian Highfield, England, 2004 Vinaccia copy**

Ian is well known for the quality of his copies. They are what is known in the trade as truly scary because he is able to get inside the head of a maker from the past and produce work that is very close to the original maker's intention. This slender instrument has a rich full tone color that projects well.

**Renè Morizot, France 1934**

Paris between the wars was a hotbed of gypsy music combined with jazz. In 1934 Stephan Grapelli and Django Reinhard founded "The Quintet Hot Club de France" and a new musical style was born. Renè made instruments for this taste and age. His workmanship is impeccable and the sound of our violin is warm, dreamy and open.

## **Cremona Secrets Revealed at the National Music Museum**

This summer music lovers from around the world will be heading for Vermillion, South Dakota, to be a part of the **National Music Museum's** conference, **Celebrating the 500<sup>th</sup> Birthday of Andrea Amati: The Secrets, Lives, and Violins of the Great Cremona Makers 1505-1744**. The conference will begin on July 1<sup>st</sup> and end on July 4<sup>th</sup>.

Since 1550, the city of Cremona, Italy has been home to the greatest of all the Italian violinmakers. The instruments produced by the original Cremonese violinmakers were of the highest quality, and were based upon mathematical and acoustical concepts and beauty of form. Cremona was the birthplace of Stradivari, Bergonzi, Guarneri del Gesu, Ceruti, Storioni, and several members of the Amati family. Andrea Amati is regarded as the "father" of the Cremonese school of violinmaking, and this conference celebrates the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth.

During the four-day conference attendees will have the opportunity to hear presentations given by some of the most renowned experts on violinmaking. Speakers include: **Carlo Chiesa**, Italy; **Andrew Dipper**, United States; **Roger Hargrave**, Germany; and **Duane Rosengard**, United States. There will also be presentations exploring daily life in 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century Cremona, panel discussions, and a closing Cremonese banquet including a fireworks display.

Space for this unique event is limited to 100 participants, so if you're interested in attending please contact the National Music Museum at [www.usd.edu/smm](http://www.usd.edu/smm) for more information and to reserve a spot.

If you can't attend this summer's conference, don't worry. There is plenty to see at the museum year round. Stop by and visit the more than 10,000 American, European, and non-Western instrument collections from all cultures and historical periods.

Givens Violins hopes that all of our newsletter readers will be able to experience this national treasure for themselves. We also encourage you to help support the museum by becoming members. Givens Violins will upgrade the first 100 newsletter readers who join the museum at the \$35 Member level to the \$50 Donor level, just mention us when joining. Museum members will receive special invitations to previews, receptions, concerts, special events, gift shop discounts, the quarterly *Newsletter*, and research services.

*CLAIRE GIVENS VIOLINS, INC.*

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*Celebrating our 28th Year!*  
**Claire Givens Violins, Inc.**  
*provides*

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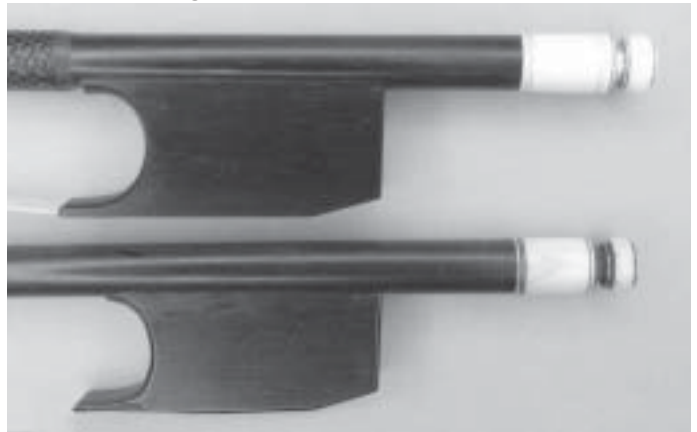
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*LaVoce is the newsletter of Claire Givens Violins, Inc., Dealers, Makers and Restorers of Fine Violins, Violas, Cellos and Bows. It is part of a concerted and continuing commitment to keep our customers informed.*

*LaVoce is edited and designed by Julene Flink and published periodically.*

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**Andrew Dipper Restorations**  
Bow Making



Original violin bow and its bench copy by Andrew Dipper

Occasionally we come across very fine baroque bows to copy. This year has been no exception. We were very kindly loaned a very fine baroque violin bow that had been part of the Roda collection (lower bow). Originally thought to be Scottish, it is more likely to be Italian circa 1760. I made four violin bows and one viola bow based on this model, and the viola bow remains available. I will be making more bows on this pattern. This year the price will be \$1,400 each for the violin and \$1,600 for the viola. Bows are available from time to time, including original baroque and transitional ones.