

LaVoce

of CLAIRE GIVENS VIOLINS, INC.



SUMMER 2009

LaVoce is the newsletter of Claire Givens Violins, Inc. It is part of a concerted and continuing commitment to keep our customers informed.

In this issue:

Givens Violins has launched a new website www.givensviolins.com with a shopping page that contains pictures and descriptions of all our current instruments and bows. It was developed with teachers & parents in mind as well as discerning players searching for a better instrument. *Read more on page 3.*

It has been our focus to identify and develop talented makers. They are on our website for you to discover at www.givensviolins.com. Click on "Instruments and Bows" from our home page.

The 2009 Atlanta ASTA conference, for which we were a bronze sponsor, was an exceptional event in the string world. The attendance was the highest ever. The enthusiasm among the teachers and players was palpable and spread like wild fire. *Read more on page 3.*

Givens Violins' 32 years in business with its permanent staff of violin makers and in-house expertise has created the foundation for long term relationships with players. We are starting a new LaVoce feature to showcase and give thanks for our very special customers. *Read more on page 2.*



*Violin by Lorenzo Ventapane,
Naples 1799*

Spotlight on Long-Term Givens Customers



*Leslie Shank, Assistant Concertmaster,
The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra*



*Kristi Velicer, Assistant principal Second Violin,
Kansas City Orchestra*

Givens Violins is proud to count many of the region's finest professional string players and instructors among our long-term customers. We are touched and honored by the numerous unsolicited testimonials that we receive. In fact, we've dedicated an entire page of our website to customer testimonials.

Leslie Shank and Kristi Velicer recently told us what being a Givens customer means to them.

Leslie Shank, Assistant Concertmaster of the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, has been a Givens customer for over twenty years. Leslie acquired a pristine Joseph Gagliano, Naples 1783 violin from us fifteen years ago "When I was looking for my violin, Claire worked very hard to help me find just the right violin for my price and the sound that I was looking for. I am very happy that she found the Gagliano that I currently enjoy playing."

"I always feel well attended by the entire staff, whether it's finding me the right strings for my instrument, choosing

a shoulder pad, or adjusting my violin for the best sound possible. They know my instrument and bows very well. The trade policy has been great for me. I like to switch bows occasionally as my playing needs change." Leslie continues to visit Givens Violins for her instrument and bow repair and maintenance because, "I feel that [Givens Violins] takes a special interest in helping me maintain my instrument and bows because they know them inside and out."

One of the things Ms. Shank enjoys most about her profession is the opportunity for travel. She has performed in Singapore, Japan and all over Europe. "I have enjoyed the chance to meet and work with musicians from all over the world.

The music world can be surprisingly small, and I always run into someone that I know wherever I go."

We've had the privilege to watch **Kristi Velicer**, Assistant Principal Second Violin with the Kansas City Orchestra, grow from a gifted student into a fine professional performer. "I have been coming to Claire's shop since I was in junior high school. My teacher at the time, Cheryl Stewart, spoke very highly of Claire and all that her shop had to offer. Every instrument, bow and case I have purchased since then (suffice to say it was a long time ago) has come from Givens Violins." In 1993, Kristi purchased a beautiful Giulio Degani, Venice 1913 violin that she currently plays.

Although Ms. Velicer no longer lives in Minnesota, she continues to visit Givens Violins for all of her instrument and bow needs. Kristi states that the "benefits of a long-term relationship with Givens Violins is the reliability and confidence in knowing that the work that will be done on my instrument will be of the highest quality and with the greatest care. I never worry about how a bow rehair will come out or if a touch-up job will look right. Also when making a purchase, I know that Claire is extremely picky in what she chooses to sell and has excellent taste. She is also able to find instruments to suit your taste based on over-the-phone conversations so that when you come in she is ready for you. I appreciate her attention to detail and most of all, her care for the entire shop and her employees that I encounter when I stop in or call. I have been away from the Twin Cities long enough and have lived in several major cities to know quality and I have never had anything but the best from Claire's shop."

The New Givensviolins.com

In a time when everyone's life is complicated and in need of convenience, Claire Givens Violins has designed their website to make it easier "to shop" our large selection of violins, violas, cellos and their bows.

We have added the following features to the website:

- A shopping page for violins and violas under the price range of \$4,000 and cellos under \$5,000 with suggestions for appropriate bows and cases.
- 3-view pictures of every violin, viola, and cello—front, back & scroll with zoom options.
- Current inventory which is updated daily.
- Descriptions of each instrument that contain statements regarding the maker, the significance of the particular instrument, how it looks and most importantly, how it sounds.
- A search field in the upper right corner of every page, so you can search by maker or category.
- Pages of testimonials from our customers. These are totally unsolicited statements taken from letters we received from players after they had done business with us.

Who would buy a violin on-line without trying it first?

This was always a question of ours. Yet, we have met quite a few brave players and their families who have done just that.

Our concern is that there are often no guarantees, follow up service, future trade options and no development of a long term relationship that serves the musical life of the player. What might seem to be a bargain does not recognize the value of a well set-up instrument that sounds and responds its best.

Givens Violins is offering its violins & violas under the price of \$4,000 and cellos under \$5,000 for on-line purchase with special discounts, warranties and return privileges plus recommendations for bows and cases. Our expert shipping department will arrange the details of delivery.

After proving, over the last 32 years, how careful we are regarding our inventory, we hope you will trust us to choose your next violin, viola or cello. Contact us to discuss your needs.



Givens Violins — a proud Sponsor of the 2009 ASTA Conference

by Claire Givens



Andrew Dipper working with an ASTA family

ASTA (American String Teachers Association) held its annual conference in Atlanta, March 18-21. Givens Violins continued its support of this important organization through exhibiting and sponsorship.

For string teachers this is a conference not to miss. The days are jam-packed with master classes, performances, educational sessions and new-product show cases. In the evenings there were wonderful concerts by **Daryl Anger**, **Zuill Bailey** and the winners of the Alternative Style Awards.

A major benefit for the attendees was the expansive exhibit hall of violin makers, dealers, publishers, and inventors of string player accessories. Andrew Dipper and I had the pleasure of hosting the Givens Violins booth. It was the perfect opportunity to showcase the quality and variety of our instruments and bows.

We brought a broad range of violins, violas, and cellos in price ranges from \$500 to over \$100,000. On the top end, our Lorenzo Ventapane, Naples 1799 violin was a big hit because of its interesting, rich voice and ease of response. On the opposite end of the price range spectrum, players were amazed how much violin we were offering in our \$500 Andrea Alberti. The cello that we commissioned from Maurizio Tadioli of Cremona was also a big crowd pleaser with its rich, full voice.

Andrew and I were impressed by the enthusiasm of the teachers we met. Two weeks after the end of the conference a teacher told me he was still buzzing from the conference. He said he had notebooks full of information gleaned from sessions and that it would take another year just to implement the ideas he gathered.

We enjoyed working with new customers, teachers, players and their families and look forward to developing long term relationships with them. Givens Violins is already planning new things for their next exhibit and looking forward to the 2010 Santa Clara ASTA Conference.

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LaVoce is written and edited by Claire Givens and Sherry Parr and published periodically. Photos by Andrew Dipper and Eddie Estrin.

Dipper News

Andrew Dipper was invited to exhibit in “Maestri della Scuola Internazionale di Liuteria di Cremona 1938-2008.” This was an exhibit of the works of the former faculty members of the International Violin Making School of Cremona. He exhibited his viola d’amore made using copies of the molds and patterns of Antonio Stradivari.

Andrew Dipper taught a two day course on the History of the Baroque Bridge in Cremona, Italy in October 2008. Using examples of early bridges by Stradivari, he traced the history of the design and set-up of violin bridges from 1560 to 1830. He was pleased to have 100 violin makers and students attend his in-depth course at the Cremona Chamber of Commerce.

Andrew Dipper was accepted as a full member of the American Federation of Violin and Bow Makers (AFVBM) at the bi-annual conference in May 2008. Andrew Dipper was honored to deliver a lecture on Stradivari’s House at this meeting.

Viola bow with lion couchant frog: Andrew Dipper was commissioned to make a copy of a viola bow in the National Music Museum (NMM3389). It is carved from snakewood and African blackwood. The original bow that Andrew copied is probably of English origin, made in London around 1780-1810. The lion frog is a representation of the lion of Hannover, part of the armorials of George III of England.

Andre Dipper’s Lion frog Baroque bow

