

LaVoce

OF CLAIRE GIVENS VIOLINS, INC.



SPRING 2002

La Voce: our voice

We were grateful for the level of enthusiasm and curiosity generated for our exhibit of new Cremonese violins, violas, cellos, and older Italian instruments. It provided a needed respite from our national concerns and affirmed the importance of beautiful music and instruments in our life.

Our website -- givensviolins.com -- continues to be a favorite for all the useful information it provides for those who are searching for instruments and bows.

The wine and cello article in the previous issue of *LaVoce* was received so well that we are recommending another fine instrument and wine combination. I hope you all enjoy the trip suggestion.



Experts get younger every day: Alex Held, a seventh grade student from Northview Jr. High in Osseo, Minnesota.

Cremona Exhibit Highlights

This past fall, Givens Violins hosted the 4th Annual Exhibition of Cremona Violin Making, which featured over 40 instruments from the most established contemporary professional violinmakers from Cremona, Italy and 25 historical Italian instruments dating back to 1763. The exhibit was a huge success



The Artaria String Quartet, pictured with Claire Givens and Andrew Dipper, played a special performance with the new Cremonese instruments.

which drew public and media attention to Givens Violins. For two weeks, close to 350 people visited our own Handicraft Building's Symphony Gallery to learn about, play, or purchase the instruments. Groups from orchestra programs in local schools and from as far away as Dawson, Minnesota toured the exhibit. Professional players, teachers and students took advantage of the opportunity to play a large collection of exceptional instruments ranging in price from \$5,000 to \$160,000. Special events included an opening night party with Italian cheeses, wines, and other Cremonese delights. At the end of the exhibit, the acclaimed Artaria String Quartet played a concert with the new Cremonese instruments. Mindy Rattner of Minnesota Public Radio produced and aired three pieces highlighting the event. In addition, beautiful photos and a brief write-up of the event were included in the *Minneapolis Star & Tribune*. Thank you to those who visited and participated in the exhibit! For more photos from the exhibit, please visit the [News](#) page of our website.

Exhibit Photography courtesy of Nixdorf Studios.



Beatrice Blanc, violin teacher, MacPhail Center for the Arts.



Northview Jr. High School students had fun learning about the exhibit instruments and touring Givens Violins.

News of Note

The **Suzuki Association's 10th Annual Conference** will take place at the Minneapolis Convention Center on May 24th. Stop by **booth #210** to visit us.

Andrew Dipper and Dipper Restorations was featured in the February 2002 issue of the *Strad* in an article titled "History Man".

Every year, Claire Givens Violins sponsors a prize for the **Young people's Symphony Concert Association Competition**. This year's winner of the Givens Prize is **Ari Isaacman-Beck**.

Claire Givens' most recent appearance on the **Antiques Roadshow** during the 2002 season is on the Tucson Installment Part I, was an appraisal of a Carl Becker 1930s violin worth at least \$25,000.

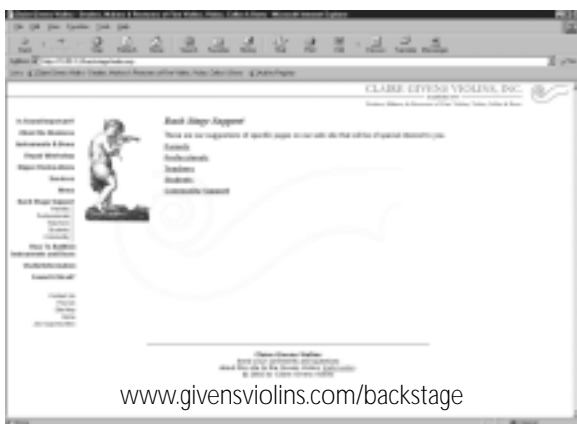
Recently, the **Board of the Minnesota String and Orchestral Teachers Association (MNSOTA)** passed a resolution opposing undisclosed teacher commissions and printed an article on the subject in the Winter issue of "String Notes". We understand that the MNSOTA action represents the first state teacher's organization willing to address the ethics of this practice. Claire Givens Violins applauds their boldness and supports their actions in helping to keep buyers of instruments aware of the implications of this practice. For complete articles on this subject, including articles by others in the trade, visit our website: www.givens.violins.com/services/teacher.asp.



On opening night, Givens Violins staff John Curtis, Ute Zahn, and Theodora Wyhnhoff offered a smorgasbord of tasty Cremonese delights such as Torrone and Mostarda.

givensviolins.com

The **Backstage Support** section of our website is a valuable resource for teachers, parents, students and professionals. Organized by audience, this page highlights our suggestions of specific pages on our web site that will be of special interest to you.



Shrine and Wine in Vermillion

John Curtis, Givens Violins bookkeeper, visits America's Shrine to Music Museum and South Dakota's only Winery

America's Shrine to Music Museum in Vermillion, South Dakota is an unlikely museum in an unlikely place. I had heard of it often, but was unclear on the scope of the museum and what, exactly, it was doing in Vermillion. Claire suggested our La Voce readers might welcome the idea for a weekend trip that combined fine instruments and wine. I was the logical scout, as I had never visited the museum and am a wine enthusiast.

The Shrine is located on the campus of the University of South Dakota, housed in the school's former Carnegie library. Even knowing something of the museum's contents in advance did not prepare me for the behemoth collection of instruments which should amaze both novice and scholar.

I took the audio tour, which provides historical commentary and recorded examples for many items in the museum. Each of the galleries contains an overwhelming number of instruments, and the tour orients you to the major pieces, allowing you to work your way around the room in an organized and, in my case, more informed fashion.

Of interest to string players specifically is the Rawlins Gallery, which houses several generations of Amati instruments, a trio of unaltered 18th century instruments, and a role call of the major Italian makers of the 17th and 18th centuries. Stradivari's 'Harrison' 1693 violin is displayed, as well as one of his guitars, a bow and a mandolino (one of only two in existence). Besides the violin family, there are many other bowed or plucked instruments dating back to 16th century Italy from several recognized masters.

Particularly interesting to me were the quartet of saxophones made by Adolphe Sax (as well as some of his more inventive and unusual instruments), and a gallery of keyboard instruments housing very nearly every developmental incarnation of the contemporary piano. My favorites, though, were the pipe and reed organs, especially the Swiss house organ, a beautiful painted pipe organ from the 18th century made by Josef Looßer.

The Shrine is as significant a collection of instruments as you will find anywhere in the world. Its scope exceeds even that of the Smithsonian. It contains the historically significant, the rare, the ornate, and the formative from all families of instruments.

From the museum, I proceeded to the Buffalo Run Winery and Bed & Breakfast. Just outside of town on a bluff overlooking the Missouri river, Buffalo Run is a fine place to grab lunch, spend the night, or have a glass of wine on the back porch, which has a great view of the river valley. The five guest rooms are charming and luxurious. All are decorated in unique themes and each offer private whirlpool baths.

Allen Bowen, who studied winemaking during his college days at U Cal Davis, entertained guests at the tasting bar while filling us in on the wines made at Buffalo Run. South Dakota is not a place that you would suspect serviceable wine grapes could be grown, but their range of wines is remarkably wide and contains something for every palate. Merlot and Chardonnay are made from trucked-in grapes.

Fruit and dessert wines are made from local fruit. Probably the most interesting item on the card for me, is the Wild Grape wine, a red made from the indigenous *Vitis Riparus*. The Wild Grape is feisty, with briary fruit and somewhat of an herbal overtone. It is unlike any other grape in the common repertoire.

If you are planning a stay at the Buffalo Run, aim for a weekend when they are serving dinner. The winery has dinners once a month on Saturday nights, featuring gourmet menus and often a guest chef.

At breakfast, Eldon and Sherry Nygaard, the proprietors, chatted with the guests. Eldon was glad to pull up a chair and fill me in on his meetings with Colin Powell and former President Ford, the results of the previous night's USD basketball game, and how the whole Buffalo Run Resort sprouted from "a hobby that went out of control". Breakfast was excellent, featuring eggs in puff pastry, homemade sausage and fresh fruit.

If you're going to visit Vermillion, I suggest leaving yourself some travel time and arrange for a full weekend. Both the Shrine and Buffalo Run are good reasons to take the trip.

For a longer version of this article, visit the [News](#) page of our website: www.givensviolins.com.



John Curtis and Dr. Andre Larson, the museum's Director, with a Thai goblet drum, inside the Shrine to Music Museum.

America's Shrine to Music Museum
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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 Beth Barsness and published periodically.

Dipper Restorations

The last six months have been guitar months at Dipper Restorations. We completed work on the ivory and ebony inlaid Giovanni and Michel Sellas guitar of 1652. This instrument is pictured in the article on the Dipper shop in the February issue of the "Strad" magazine.

Chris and Andrew finished a few small repairs and extensive documentation on a five-course guitar newly acquired by the Shrine to Music Museum. One of the earliest known Spanish guitars, it dates between 1680 and 1710.

We have just completed restoration of a very rare John Hare violin dated 1677. This interesting instrument comes from the period of revival in English instrument-making fostered by the Restoration.

The workshop is making a Guarneri model violin using spruce wood that fell in the Boundary waters storm of July 4 and 5, 1999, and wood from a 200 year old maple that fell in a hurricane that devastated England in April 1986.