

Domian Grodzki

FOREWORD

Welcome to the world that I love so much.

The world of music. A world that transcends time, captures emotions, and leaves us longing for more. It has the ability to heal, to educate, and to create more tolerant human beings. For the last twenty-six years I have been a part of this world, and cannot imagine my life otherwise.

I have been a student, performer, teacher, sponsor, and a businessman. I have seen the inside and out of almost every profession that is associated with classical music, and I am proud to know the most influential people in the business.

For the past nine years my life has concentrated on helping musicians find their voices, and protecting the instruments that make these voices possible. My methods might seem eccentric, constantly traveling the world, but my means are rather precise: I am a relentless detective and matchmaker finding great masters' violins and quietly putting them in the careful hands of renowned musicians and Medici of our age.... the kindred spirits who understand both the importance of this preservation, and the undeniable high performing investment qualities that have appreciated in every economic environment.

These rarified, finite, and remarkable stringed instruments are as valuable as daVinci or Rembrandt paintings in how they inform us about who we are and where we come from. They are works of art in every possible regard, and without them classical music as we know it would not exist.

The following pages show violins, violas and one cello that have played important roles in my quest, and represent the quality of instruments that I have sourced and placed with my clients. This constitutes my practice.

I invite you to join me on this journey, and trust that you will find it as remarkable and fulfilling as I do.

Roman Goronok

NICOLO AMATI, CREMONA C. 1660

This violin of remarkable age was sourced on the west coast of the United States, and placed with a concert artist in Switzerland. I had been looking for the right instrument to place with him for some time, having discussed requirements only by email. When I introduced the violin to the artist, after playing it for only ten minutes, he said *“This is what I’ve been looking for all this time.”*



CARLO BERGONZI, CREMONA C. 1741

This particularly handsome instrument features a mesmerizing amount of original varnish. Remarkably, the back still shows the original brush strokes of the maker. It was the first purchase by a buyer who has subsequently become one of my most valued clients, continuing to collect outstanding stringed instruments, and loaning them to performers.



CARLO BERGONZI, CREMONA C. 1744

Only slightly younger than the preceding violin by Carlo Bergonzi, but very different in appearance, this instrument was purchased by the family of an outstanding emerging musician. It has enabled her to succeed and continue succeeding on an international stage, building an important career.



CAMILIUS CAMILLI, MANTUA C. 1739

This violin was restored by the legendary Carl F. Becker during his time at William Lewis and Sons in Chicago. The varnish and the condition of the instrument show the meticulous care that went into this protection. This magnificent example of the work of Camilius Camilli is of a rare larger pattern which allows its use as a first rate concert instrument. I placed this violin initially with performers in California, and I am currently working on a subsequent transaction.



GASPARO DA SALO, BRESCIA C. 1600

The oldest instrument in this book is also the rarest. It is one of only three surviving cellos by Gaspar da Salo of Brescia, often regarded as the originator of the contemporary violin. The scarcity of examples and the exceptional acoustical qualities of this cello gives it a historical significance comparable to the works of da Vinci and Rembrandt, and makes an equivalent contribution to cultural distinction.



FRANCESCO GOBETTI, VENICE C. 1714

Francesco Gobetti, sometimes described as the poor man's Stradivari, has here produced an instrument capable of outperforming other violins of up to three times in value. This rare model, exhibiting magnificent varnish and outline, has been purchased by a renowned orchestra assembling a world-class collection.



MATTEO GOFFRILLER, VENICE C. 1695

In placing this violin, I was able to broker three-way links between a young performer, a teacher, and a philanthropic sponsor. The flatter model of this instrument produces a rich sound with exceptional overtones suited to large concert hall performance.



MATTEO GOFFRILLER, VENICE C. 1700

It is interesting to compare this second Venetian violin, that exhibits a very beautiful widely flamed single-piece back, with the preceding instrument which is five years younger by the same maker. An initial US sale financed the completion of a necessary restoration and facilitated a subsequent sale to an important European client.



J.B. GUADAGNINI, MILAN C. 1751

This beautiful violin by the much traveled instrument maker, Jean Baptiste Guadagnini, is from his respected Milanese period. It is known as ex-Sametini, and exemplifies both acoustic and aesthetic excellence. Guadagnini's work is greatly valued by performers and it was possible to match this violin to the known needs of a long-standing client.



JOSEPH GUARNERI FILIUS ANDREAE, CREMONA C. 1710

One of seven Cremonese instruments in this collection, this fine violin is principally the work of Joseph Guarneri filius Andreae, with the table made by Peter Guarneri of Mantua. After taking an interest in this instrument for an extended period, and facilitating a complex financial arrangement that involved selling a number of violins, I was able to place it with the current owner who uses it as a concert instrument.



GIUSEPPE GUARNERI DEL GESU, CREMONA C. 1730

This extraordinary violin from the early period of the celebrated Giuseppe Guarneri del Gesu of Cremona, is one of the very few examples of his work that remains unnamed. Consequently the current owner is able to name the instrument at their discretion. It has joined other fine instruments in the care of a passionate and dedicated guardian, whose love and interest in stringed instruments is both exemplary and inspiring.



NICOLAS KITTEL, ST. PETERSBURG C. 1850

These bows were commissioned for Maximilian Joseph Eugene Auguste Napoleon de Beauharnais; 3rd Duke of Leuchtenberg; 3rd Prince of Venice; Prince des Francais; Hereditary Prince of the Kingdom of Italy (a creation of Napoleon I of France) and claimant to the Grand Duchy of Frankfurt; a General in the Russian Army and President of the Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg. Upon his wedding to the Grand Duchess Maria Nikolayevna of Russia he became His Royal Highness Prince von Romanowsky. In 1856, the bows were presented to the concertmaster of the newly created Philharmonic Society of St. Petersburg. His name, Jean Pickel, is engraved on one of them. Extensive documentation exists about these historically important bows, and they currently form an important part of a personal collection.



JOSEPH NICOLAS LECLERC, PARIS C. 1775

One of the two violas in this publication, this instrument is a remarkable example of the French stringed instrument making of the 18th century, combining elegant and restrained varnish with refined workmanship. Achievements of this caliber merit serious review of the overall market status of 18th century French stringed instruments.



LOUIS SIMON PAJEOT, MIRECOURT C. 1780

Given its fine condition, it is hard to believe that this remarkable violin bow dates from the 1780s. A simply beautiful artifact, this bow exemplifies the special combination of appearance and functionality that appropriately designates fine and rare stringed instruments as part of the art market.



DOMINIQUE PECCATTE, MIRECOURT C. 1830

This 19th century bow comes from the Renaissance of bow-making within France to meet the functional demands of then current trends in classical music. It has been featured in several reference publications as an exemplar of its type, and has a secure and safe home in the care of a discriminating collector.



FRANCOIS PIQUE, PARIS C. 1802

Through knowledge of Italian workmanship, Pique invigorated and extended the refined craftsmanship of late 18th century French instrument making. The scroll of this viola in particular exhibits vigor and confidence, and the varnish takes a similarly robust approach.



SANTO SERAPHIN, VENICE C. 1735

A pupil of Nicolo Amati, whose work opens this collection, Santo Seraphin adopted various influences and achieved an eclectic style. This very fine example of the maker's work, distinguishes itself through an assured choice of wood, very fine varnish, and elegant craftsmanship. This very responsive instrument with good carrying power effectively meets the needs of soloists, and has attracted imitators.



ANTONIO STRADIVARI, CREMONA C. 1701

This violin, ex-Dushkin, was one of several important instruments owned by pedagogue and violinist Samuel Dushkin, a collaborator of Igor Stravinsky. Created at the beginning of Stradivari's Golden Period, it has continuously been in use by leading performers and continues being heard in concert halls around the world.



ANTONIO STRADIVARI, CREMONA C. 1718

This is one of the best instruments I have ever handled. Created at the height of Stadivari's Golden Period, this outstanding violin has inherent finesse and has survived in very fine condition, most unusually without deleterious use, inappropriate restoration or cosmetic enhancement. It resides in the care of a kindred spirit who is both willing and able to meet the responsibilities which come with stewardship of an instrument of this significance.



AFTERWORD

For many years musicians, collectors and educated private and institutional buyers have benefited from a remarkable secret. The examples of instruments included in this portfolio demonstrate a form of investment of truly outstanding quality and value that is still not widely known or understood. It offers three distinct benefits: first, remarkable financial performance with unparalleled security; second, social responsibility through providing the best of care for these irreplaceable instruments; third, the intense personal pleasure of connoisseurship and the transforming experiences of classical music.

Although the finest instrument examples are now approximately three hundred years old, they are still fulfilling their original function, and combine the qualities of fine works of art and tools of the trade. Most of them are in regular use by the world's leading musicians and it is because of this functionality and location within a major artistic tradition they are resistant to trends and changing fashions, which influence market value. Their value is determined by period, physical condition, acoustical performance and history: all factors which can be evaluated by sector experts. Prior owners – whether individual, institutional or past players – contribute a tremendous emotional element associated with each instrument's sound and history and comprise an integral part of the purchase decision made by prospective players and investors. The story, or provenance, offers a direct historical link with some of the world's greatest and most remarkable people and positively influences the prices of many instruments.

INVESTMENT IN FINE AND RARE STRINGED INSTRUMENTS

The value of fine and rare stringed instruments has not only risen throughout their traded existence, but more importantly, it has never decreased. The finest and most valuable instruments were made in Italy in the 17th and 18th centuries and now comprise a finite group of rare and superior examples. It is this scarcity of

supply, plus definitive craftsmanship and acoustical performance, that has made these antique violins so highly coveted by collectors, curators and investors. At the top end of the market, post 1700 Antonio Stradivari violins and post 1730 Guarneri del Gesù violins are currently valued in the range of \$4,000,000 to \$10,000,000 depending on their condition, sound, provenance and historical importance.

These pricing parameters make FRSI a more finite and dependable investment sector than for example, fine art, where shifts in taste and fashion have a complex and often unpredictable effect on prices, and also make investors heavily dependent on advisor opinion. Works of art of similar rarity and quality in other sectors have now achieved very high and possibly finite prices – the 'plateau effect' – but FRSI prices are still increasing and this suggests large continuing growth potential for owners.

Fine quality instruments are essential for the continuation of western classical music and investment in FRSI is socially responsible, providing guardianship that preserves these masterpieces for the benefit of future generations. FRSI also offer a highly effective alternative to life insurance and pension funds – providing a more fulfilling and life-enhancing experience than paying premiums – and are an attractive option for funds which may later be required for other purposes because of changes in lifestyle or circumstances. FRSI gain great benefits through their size and current trade regulations. Instruments can be easily taken to any location for inspection during the run-up to purchase, and they can be sold at the location of the greatest demand, unaffected by local economic conditions. Unlike stocks and bonds, investments in FRSI are fully insurable for their appraised value with an AAA rated insurance company against loss caused by damage, fire, theft, vandalism, terrorism or environmental disaster, which is almost impossible to say of any other kind of investments.

UNDERSTANDING THE FRSI MARKETPLACE

The FRSI market comprises a finite and non-renewable set of superior examples – an irreplaceable product becoming increasingly scarce. Recent growth in institutional FRSI investment has introduced an alternative form of patronage for the support of classical music. Foundations such as the Chi-Mei Culture Foundation, Nippon Music Foundation, Samsung Foundation of Culture, and the Austrian National Bank have purchased substantial numbers of FRSI, reducing the already small pool of available instruments.

Replacement of the FRSI supply is highly controversial. To an untrained ear, new violins may have similar sound qualities to historic originals, but their sound character and lack of significant investment value does not make comparison viable. Given the choice, musicians prefer to play on, and many listeners prefer to hear, a fine antique instrument.

Investors sometimes ask why the prices of FRSI at an auction house are lower than most dealer prices. About twenty years ago, the market for old stringed instruments divided: one market represented by the auction houses, and another represented by a number of dealers dedicated to the most important Cremonese instruments, providing commensurate expertise and specialization. The auction houses became an outlet for lesser quality instruments as many dealers used them to dispose of their surplus inventory and to acquire further instruments in need of remedial work to bring them to a saleable condition. Consequently the auction houses have a selective exposure to FRSI, affecting their breadth of experience and knowledge. Very often, it is FRSI auction results that make headlines, but the finest instruments generally do not reach the auction rooms. They are sold in private transactions through the international specialist dealer network.

THE ROMAN GORONOK COMPANY

The Roman Goronok Company was founded in 2000 as Roman M. Goronok Inc. with a mission of sale, acquisition, and consignment of fine and rare stringed instruments and their bows, and is now regarded as one of the leading dealers worldwide. The company has an average annual turnover of \$10,000,000 worth of fine and rare stringed instruments, including works of Antonio Stradivari, Giuseppe Guarneri del Gesù, Carlo Bergonzi and many other important Italian makers of the 18th century. The principal, Roman Goronok, has substantial experience in the business of FRSI, investment in this sector, and the acoustical performance of fine instruments. The company is ideally positioned to facilitate a meticulous analysis to identify FRSI that have the greatest potential of investment growth, resulting in proposals that include immediate investment plans, long-term financial performance goals and musical objectives and aspirations.

Benefiting from an irreproachable business reputation and supportive relationships with the most influential people in the business, Roman Goronok is committed to excellence. Personalized attention, exceptional performance, and commitment to every detail make The Roman Goronok Company a perfect partner for discriminating clients.

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