

Curator of the exhibition: Christopher Reuning

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Christopher Reuning, Presidente / Chairman

Peter Beare, John Becker, Eric Blot

Bruce Carlson, Carlo Chiesa, Silvio Levaggi

Andreas Post, Duane Rosengard, James Warren

Virginia Villa, Coordinamento / Co-ordination

Bergonzi

Cremona 25 settembre - 10 ottobre 2010

A CREMONESE MASTER UNVEILED

The great tradition of classical Cremonese instrument making is symbolically over with Carlo Bergonzi's demise. He was the last instrument maker trained in the workshops of Cremona at the beginning of the 18th century, though it is not yet possible to completely understand who were his direct teachers: archive documents reveal that the Bergonzi family had good relationships with Vincenzo Ruggeri, but Carlo's instruments feature technical and style-specific characteristics that make them closer also to the Stradivari's and Guarneri's. What is certain is that Bergonzi created top quality instruments, excellent both from the craftsmanship viewpoint and for their extraordinary acoustic features. He was a very capable instrument maker deeply observing and absorbing Stradivari's and Guarneri del Gesù's traits, replicating what he thought of interest yet still maintaining his own style.

SYMPOSIUM

It is only because his instruments are so rare that he was not extensively studied and renowned. This is why the proposal for a symposium dedicated to his work, which will take place in the two days immediately preceding the inauguration of Mondomusica fair, is so important. In the afternoon of September 29, two lectures will introduce Carlo Bergonzi in the context of the Cremonese instrument making of the first half of the 18th century. A panel discussion will follow as well as an audition of some of the violins on display. The second day of the conference - Thursday, September 30 - will include technical reports on the style and personality of Carlo Bergonzi's work.

A second round table will conclude the symposium. Some of the world's most renowned violin experts are expected to participate, many of them having dedicated special attention to Bergonzi. Among these: Christopher Reuning, John Becker, John Dilworth, Duane Rosengard, Andreas Post, James Warren, Eric Blot, Roger Hargrave, Hieronymus Koestler and Carlo Chiesa. The objective of this symposium is to provide the opportunity to share a state of the art knowledge on Bergonzi, at the end of a long work of preparation for this celebration of Carlo Bergonzi. Our wish is that Bergonzi's work will start leaving a positive and deep mark to contemporary violin makers.

Carlo Chiesa

For the first time Cremona will focus its attention on the work of one of its most important sons: Carlo Bergonzi.

Although his instruments are ranked just behind those of his more famous contemporaries, Antonio Stradivari and Giuseppe Guarneri del Gesù, Bergonzi has never been the subject of an exhibition. This year the Fondazione Stradivari will address this with a comprehensive exhibition entitled "Carlo Bergonzi, a Cremonese Master Unveiled" to take place from September 25th to October 10th, 2010 at the Santa Maria Della Pietà Cultural Center.

The exhibition will feature about 24 particularly significant instruments, covering the career of Carlo Bergonzi and including several early violins by his son and only student Michele Angelo, to demonstrate the transition of the workshop from father to son. This number represents nearly half of the known works of Carlo Bergonzi. In 2008 we showed five instruments by the two Bergonzis in the context of violin making in Cremona in their

time. Shown alongside the work of Stradivari and Guarneri, Bergonzi's unique interpretation of violin design was clearly seen. Our forthcoming project aims to more thoroughly explore the development of Bergonzi's work starting from Carlo's earliest instruments, where the style of his likely teacher Vincenzo Ruggeri is reflected, on to works bearing similarities to those of Antonio Stradivari. By 1730 Carlo had settled into his most recognizable model and became a more productive maker. We will show the eight most important instruments he made in his "golden period". Late in the 1730s the increasingly significant participation of Michele Angelo can be recognized, and a good number of these transitional violins will be on display, together with several independent works by the son, made before and just after his father's death in 1747. One of the highlights of the exhibition will be the only known cello attributed to Carlo Bergonzi, for the first time shown in public side by side with the extraordinary viola built by the two Bergonzis perhaps starting from a body left incomplete by Antonio Stradivari which one of the few surviving mandolins made by Michele Angelo.

The catalogue of the exhibition will illuminate the biography of the two Bergonzis thanks to recently discovered archival material. Their work will be



Il riccio del violino Hart
Hart violin scroll

intensively examined from a technical point of view, with a particular attention to compare it to that of Stradivari and del Gesù.

With this exhibit we hope to shed a good deal more light on a great master, with the aim to bring the proper attention to his important contribution to the craft of violin making in Cremona.

Christopher Reuning