

# JOURNAL

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## AMERICAN VIOLA SOCIETY

Chapter of  
**THE INTERNATIONAL VIOLA SOCIETY**  
 Association for the Promotion of Viola Performance and Research

Vol. 2 No. 3

November 1986



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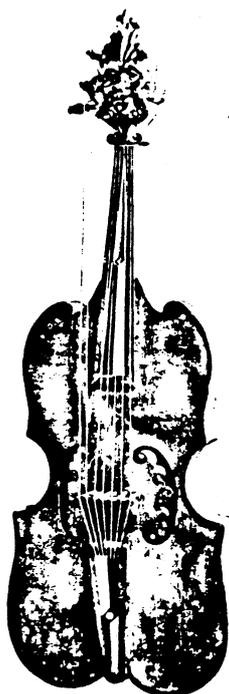


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## WHAT IS THE PROPER SIZE FOR A VIOLA?

by

WILLIAM H. MOENNIG, JR.

*Editor's Note: The author, one of America's best known luthiers, passed away on September 6, 1986. The article appears here with permission of the American String Teacher.*

Many times I have been asked what is the proper size for a viola? I still don't have the answer. There are devoted advocates of the 17" viola and equally devoted advocates for a 15 1/2" viola. Some schools favored the larger instruments, the English certainly favored the smaller ones, and the Italians made both. The German maker, Ritter, felt that the ideal viola sound came from an 18 1/2" viola, while the Spanish maker, Parramon, thought that the ideal was a 21" viola played between the knees like a cello. Each of these makers has advocates for their particular viewpoint.

Back at the beginning of this century the viola was the poor stepchild of the orchestra. There was little in the way of repertoire, little in the way of technical development, and even less in the way of encouragement to the player. I remember those days very well. A fine violinist remained a first violinist, but a lesser one became the second violinist or perhaps a violist. Many decent players went to a job with a double case carrying a violin and a small viola. It was certain employment for a violinist who could not stand up to the competition. Max Aronoff liked to repeat Brahms's comment on being introduced to a small town violist. "What a pity" he remarked, "and he is so young." Few of those violists could handle a large size viola. It had to be small enough

so that they could change instruments quickly and without difficulty. My father often told me with sorrow in his voice that his first task upon coming to this country to work for his brother-in-law had been to reduce the size of violas. He had lost count of the number of violas he had reduced and felt certain that this same thing was happening all over the world. Not even a Philadelphia Orchestra violist could play a viola which was much larger than 15 1/2" to 15 3/4".

The old masters had appreciated that the viola should have its own sound, a dark rich timbre, somewhere between a violin and cello, and they believed that only a 17" or longer body length would allow the inner air space needed to provide this type of tone. It was Leopold Stokowski who first insisted that his players in the Philadelphia Orchestra should play on larger instruments with a deep viola tone. The scurry for larger violas started, but few of the larger classic instruments remained, and those only at a price that the players could not afford.

### Large Violas

In those days, many of the fine violists studied at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia where Louis Bailly was professor of viola. Bailly played on two fine Gaspar da Salò violas, each of them 17 1/2" long. Mrs. Bok, the founder of Curtis, who later married Efrem Zimbalist, also purchased a Nicolo Amati for Max Aronoff's use, and it had a body length of 17 3/8". Their pupils were anxious to have violas which sounded like those of their teachers and since there were so few old instruments, they started commissioning new violas. Louis Bailly commissioned his countryman, Charles Enel to create copies of one of his Gaspars for the use of his students, violas which are still in the Curtis

collection. When I came back to America, I was deluged with commissions to make copies of the Gasparis and especially of the Nicolo Amati. Many also wanted copies of an Antonius and Hieronymus Amati viola which also belonged to the Curtis Institute and which measured 16 5/8". With wonderful new literature for the viola by such composers as Bloch, Hindemith, and Bartók, the violists needed an instrument which allowed them great playing facility so that they could play in all positions up to the fingerboard and beyond. They wanted that deep, rich sound of a big instrument, but they needed the playability of those small violas. Lionel Tertis, a warm and generous man who was so deeply committed to the viola, endeavored to establish a model for viola size. I had endless correspondence with him discussing the ideals of viola proportions and, along with several other makers in England and on the Continent, made violas according to his drawings and design. They had a body length of 16 5/8" with sloping upper shoulders to facilitate movement in the upper positions. They simply could not please everybody though, for while some were pleased, for others it was "thumbs down." To improve facility, Otto Erdesz recently designed a viola with the upper right shoulder cut away to ease movement in the upper position.

My solution was to follow the conventional shape as I did for the violas of William Primrose. Bill had two violas, a cut-down Amati which measured 15 5/8" and a temporary loan of the MacDonald Strad of 1701. He wanted a deeper darker tone than that of the Amati, coupled with the singing qualities of the MacDonald. I accomplished this by increasing the width of the upper bouts slightly while sloping the shoulders more. I was careful not to increase the width of the C-bouts to give freedom in bowing,

but I increased the width of the lower bout and raised the height of the ribs, particularly the lower ones. To increase the internal air volume I used an Amati *f* with a wider stem. I was able to give a darker tone. In this way I was able to achieve a rich, dark tone in the lower strings and a clear vibrant tone in the upper strings.

To enhance this tone quality I used a hard, brilliant, closely flamed maple for the back and ribs, and a soft, broadgrained spruce for the top. The maple gave it power and brilliance and the soft spruce helped to give a rich, dark quality. I finished that viola in 1945 and Bill used it for all of his concertizing, including his famed recording of *Harold in Italy* by Berlioz with the Boston Symphony under Sergei Koussevitsky.

Five years later I made another viola for Bill. He requested one with a body length of 16 9/16". We kept the same model, enlarging it, but he requested that the string length not be increased beyond 15" with 14 1/2" being ideal.

#### An Ideal Size?

It seems then, that the ideal size for violas seems to be the biggest size that a player can comfortably handle with facility, and generally, the bigger the player and the bigger their hands, the larger the instrument they can handle. So now, I have to contradict myself? Lionel Tertis was a very small man and yet he played on an enormous Montagnana. I saw it many times and while I do not have the measurement, I do recall that it was at least 17". Louis Bailly with his 17 1/2" Gaspar had wonderful technical facility, even holding it under his chin while turning the page with his left hand, and yet he was barely taller than Tertis. Joseph de Pasquale could handle that viola just as well as did Bailly, his teacher, and its present owner, Scott Nickrenz, is

just as fluent in his performances with it. I recently heard a recording that he made of the Devienne Duos with his wife, the flutist, Paula Robison. Now *that* is a viola sound!

The Curtis Amati has long been owned by Norman Shore, a member of the Chicago Civic Opera Orchestra. Would he part with it? Never! After Norman bought the Amati, Max Aronoff, who played it previously, continued to play on the copy I made for him and later acquired from us a gorgeous Giovanni Grancino which is now owned by Kathryn Plummer of the Blair String Quartet. She is only a slip of a girl and yet she can handle her 16 7/8" viola with wonderful ease and produces a tone that is out of this world. On the other hand, Emanuel Vardi, who always played on a 17" viola, now plays on a 16 1/2 " viola.

Have I confused you sufficiently?

*When William Moennig, Jr. entered the shop of his father in Philadelphia in 1921, he began learning the art his family had practiced for eleven generations, dating back to the seventeenth century in Bavaria. He later attended Temple Business School, then worked in Europe for the Master Makers in Markneukirchen. He also trained at the Violin-Making School in Mittenwald. In 1936, he received a Meister (Master) Certificate and was awarded the title of Geigenbaumeister, an honor never before awarded an American.*

*He was most recently the artist teacher of stringed instrument repair at Vanderbilt University's Blair School of Music. His instruments are prized: his custom-made viola for William Primrose was reported in both Time magazine and in the London-based Strad. Primrose recorded the Bartók Concerto on a Moennig viola.■*

## A VISIT WITH GUSTAV SZEREDI-SAUPE "MAGYARORSZAG"

by

DWIGHT POUNDS

I did not realize when I wrote Franz Zeyringer, president of the International Viola Society, in March 1986, suggesting that we go to Budapest during my sabbatical visit with him in Austria, that I had given him an excuse to do something he had wanted to do for some time: visit his friend and fellow violist, Gustav Szeredi-Saupe. This Hungarian musician had performed on viola and viola d'amore in 1980 at Viola Congress VIII in Graz, Austria with Anna Molnar (his wife), harpist, and Maria Vermes, violinist. Professionally they constituted the "Hungarian Harp Trio" and presented a program featuring works by di Lasso, Bassano, Heinichen, Benda, Biber, Kosa, Martinu and Jolivet. (Several of the Hungarian Harp Trio's arrangements are listed under Anna Molnar's name in various combinations of viola and harp in Zeyringer's *Literatur für Viola*.)

After my arrival in Pöllau, Franz Zeyringer suggested Tuesday and Wednesday, May 6-7, as the best time for us to go to Budapest. I called my Hungarian contact, Mrs. Magda Perlaki, a violinist in the Budapest Symphony, and gave her the times Franz and I expected to arrive.

Tuesday morning, Franz and I made an uneventful drive to the border at Rabafuzes, about a half hour from Pöllau. The border guards were mostly young men fluent in German as a second language. I heard no English, nor did anyone address me in my mother tongue, despite the fact that I carried an American passport. I calmly gave one of the young men the two pictures when requested, and began

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filling out my visa application. I was very pleased with myself on how calm I had been up to that point, as if crossing the border into the Eastern Bloc was the most normal of activities. But as I tried to print my name in the form, I found I could not draw a straight line! With a squiggle here and a jerk there, I finally completed the form. (One of the first blanks had an obvious misprint in the English translation--"Name in Bull!" It occurred to me that perhaps they knew more about me than I had thought!)

In my mind I knew that Budapest would be a beautiful city. I have heard Hungarians use the phrase, "Queen of the Danube" to describe the city, but I was not prepared for the panorama that stretched out almost as far as the eye could see? *Buda*, in the hills west of the river, and *Pest*, in the flat ground on the East Bank--BUDAPEST, a queen indeed of the Danube or any other river system! From a high point called "The Citadel" which offered a magnificent view of a magnificent city, the majestic (and much wider than I had expected) Danube separated the two boroughs. From the city there emitted what can only be described as a muffled roar, a continuous droning hum of a very busy city at work.

#### At Szerdi-Saupe's Home

We drove to Fenyves Street and the home of Mr. Szeredi-Saupe Gustav (Gustav Szeredi-Saupe. In Hungarian, the family name always precedes the given name). Franz cautioned me that the gentleman was 78 years old, and not in good health the last time he had visited him. The door opened and shouts of recognition and joy were exchanged.

The gentleman was old, frail and sometimes in obvious pain. He was unshaven and his uneven haircut was somewhat like contemporary American

styles which eliminate sideburns. He was a gentleman in every respect, but discouraged, worried about his wife, and considerably embittered by the fact that now, near the end of his life, he barely had enough pension on which to live. He supplemented his meager income by editing viola music for a local music printer. The bitterness in his voice was unusually cutting, although it also could be expressed *sotto voce* with a sardonic smile.

After the introductions he apologized that his flat was now a hospital. He was ill and his wife, Anna, recovering from surgery, could not even get out of bed. A good part of their professional careers had been spent on the road as musicians. She was somewhat younger than her husband, and despite her physical ailments, Anna Szeredi-Saupe was still a very attractive woman, obviously well educated and cultured. Two large French concert harps occupied what little space was still in the room.

When he sat at his old and cluttered desk in the misty and diffuse light which filtered through glass panes not cleaned in many years, the old man in the high-backed, oversized straight chair seemed to harken to a different time and another age. But there with us for a few minutes, he was younger and vital once again.

It was not often that they had guests from Austria and America, and Gustav launched into a barrage of questions. He asked about my research for the American Viola Society, about my schooling and professional position, about my instrument and my playing experience. Finally he asked about my impressions of Budapest which I gladly shared with him. Not really satisfied with my answer, he rejoined with one of the most profound of questions regarding travel. "*Ja, ja, aber was machen Sie für menschliches Kontakt?!*"

("Yes, sure, but what are you doing in regard to human contact?") He was suggesting, of course, that a journey to see places and things was to little avail without ensuing human relationships. I replied with sincerity that, if it were necessary to curtail my visit and return to Austria within the hour, simply meeting him and his wife would have made the journey worthwhile. I added that I was meeting other people in Budapest, that they were musicians, and that I would see them later in the evening and the next day. The wily old man smiled as he accepted my compliment but appeared more pleased to hear that I had gone to the trouble of identifying specific Hungarians with whom to visit before coming to Budapest.

#### Ruggeri Viola

I asked the Hungarian about his viola. He replied proudly that it was a Ruggeri, one of the few known to be crafted by this great Italian master, and insisted on showing it to me. Despite my concern about the effort that the walk to the next room would require to retrieve the viola, he insisted upon doing everything himself.

The Ruggeri was very impressive but needed work by a good luthier. The case provided a poor fit for the instrument, causing the bow to make contact with the surface of the viola and rubbing some varnish off the top. It had steel strings and four adjustors, roughly analogous to having fifty-year-old radio speakers connected to a laser compact disk sound system. Still the pizzicato tones of the open strings were very pure and pleasing to the ear. The instrument was quite valuable and, with the two harps, represented the only source of capital available to the Szeredi-Saupas in an emergency. How long would he live--or want to live--without the Ruggeri?

He spoke to me of Franz Zeyringer. "Only once in a lifetime does a man have such a friend! You see how he came back to me and brought you with him. He would do anything for me. He is going to help me be buried in Pöllau!" He was determined to be buried in Austria in protest to the life he had been forced to live in Hungary. Both Zeyringer and later a German friend familiar with Hungarian culture emphasized to me that this was a most extraordinary act for a Hungarian, considering that the Magyars have a highly developed, deeply nourished and cherished concept of the *vaterland*, and love of native country. Exact comparisons are impossible, of course, but this would be roughly equivalent to a Texan requesting burial in Oklahoma or Mexico!

#### Chernobyl

There it was: my trip to Hungary. I had been there for two days, had heard no concerts, met no active violists, visited no museums, taken no organized tours and had met only six people. Still, my brief visit was worth the effort. My three sources of "menschliches Kontakt"--Gustav Szerdi-Saupe, the embittered, impoverished but intriguing old man, the working class family with whom we stayed, and the Perlakis and their associates, who were successful professionals--constituted a microcosm of Hungarian society, but could have come from any city in any country. Each of them had proved to be hardworking and sincere people of great culture and history who went to exhaustive lengths at every level to make this American and his Austrian friend feel welcome.

It was absolutely impossible to forget for one moment during this journey that a major nuclear disaster was in progress, and geographically, we were much closer to the Western Ukraine than one might think, Chernobyl being

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a single day's drive from Budapest by car. Only the direction of the wind prevented Hungary and Western Europe from receiving the very dangerous initial radiation, although varying amounts of residual nuclear fall-out spread to the west and south of the reactor site. Years will pass before even a partial concept of this disaster and its effects on the history and peoples of Europe can be formulated.

Upon my return to Kentucky, the radiology department of a local hospital examined my thyroid gland and lungs for radioactive contamination and pronounced me "clean," which is to say that detectable radioactive substances were neither ingested nor inhaled. I sincerely hope the same can be said of my Hungarian friends, especially Magda Perlaki, who was six months with child. Simply being in Austria and Hungary during the critical days of the Chernobyl incident forged me into a unique bond with the people of these countries and their history. Their experience was my experience, and in a very real sense, their fate could well be my fate.

*Dwight Pounds is a professor of music at Western Kentucky University and a member of the AVS Executive Board. He took his doctorate in Music Education at Indiana University where he also studied with William Primrose.■*

## JESSE LEVINE, MUSICIAN

by

ROSEMARY GLYDE

*Editor's Note: This is the first in a series of articles by the author on prominent violists.*

"I'm a practical man." With these words, violist-conductor-teacher Jesse Levine aptly describes himself.

I recently had the opportunity to interview him at his country home in Connecticut. When I arrived, I found Jesse strolling by his brown cedar home at the end of a country lane bordered by a dry stone wall and wild flowers. His family was outside on the green enjoying the arrival of baby kittens. The house, nestled on thirty-eight acres, dates from 1948, yet seems older, having been built with beams and boards from a one-hundred-and-fifty-year-old barn. Jesse said that if he never had any more luck, he would know why. Nothing was more fortuitous than the discovery while perusing a local newspaper.

A modest man, Jesse makes you feel uncomfortable calling him Mr. Levine. He lives with his wife, Sarah Lechner, a nurse at the Yale-New Haven Hospital, and their two sons, Joshua and Alexander, thirteen and nine years old. Sarah is a poet as well. The house they share is unpretentious, with a commodious and open front room, bordered by large picture windows reflecting the spacious green lawns and natural woods.

We settled on a settee in the front room. As we began our meeting, I remarked that Jesse's path seemed to have wandered in several different directions, rather than following the straight, deliberate direction that his achievement suggests. To those of us who have known of his work in the East, Jesse is a multi-faceted, undeniably hard-working man. Presently, he is Professor of Viola at the Yale School of Music as well as conductor of the Norwalk Symphony of Connecticut and director of the Chappaqua Symphony in New York. I first had the pleasure of hearing him in a performance of Mozart's Sinfonia

Concertante with the Ives Festival Orchestra in Danbury, Connecticut, where Jesse served admirably as both soloist and conductor. He shared the stage with Mark Piskunov and created a memorable performance.

The emergence of Jesse Levine as a prominent and influential violist is an intriguing one. Born in the Bronx, he began his fiddle studies at age nine with a neighborhood teacher, Albert Polnarioff, a Russian refugee. His father, David Levine, had an enormous influence on him. A cellist who made his living in what Jesse calls the non-concert field, his father amassed a large record collection of European performers not heard in the U.S. This collection included 7,000 recordings of radio concerts transcribed onto tape. Jesse particularly recalls his father's love of Delius.

#### **His Teacher, William Kroll**

At age twelve, he was taken by his father to the best teachers in New York for an evaluation. Of three teachers, Ivan Galamian, Raphael Bronstein, and William Kroll, the latter took to Jesse immediately. Kroll had him enter the orchestra at the then Mannes School of Music, and subsequently took him for the next four summers to his school in Woodstock, the original Byrdcliffe Colony. There Kroll, between his travels to and from Tanglewood, gave Jesse lessons three times a week, each not more than forty minutes, and with no exchange of fees.

Extensive practicing was done during the day in addition to chamber music in the evenings. As a second violinist, Jesse played every string quartet of Haydn, reading every night, with no public performance. Kroll encouraged Levine at age fourteen to join the National Orchestra under Leon Barzin at the City Center (perhaps Barzin was the seed for Levine's future

conducting). At that time Kroll held his famous Sunday night chamber music sessions where Levine met many of his life-long friends, including Erick Friedman and Barbara Kroll. Soon thereafter, he attended Tanglewood for the first of five years of orchestra and chamber music training. Jesse indicates that Joseph de Pasquale served as his model. "Joseph de Pasquale had a tremendous influence on me. I modeled myself after him."

At this point in our conversation, the inevitable question came up: "When did the viola enter the picture?" His response was, "My first year at Woodstock." He began as the second violinist in a quartet that first summer, and by the third week Kroll suggested he bring the viola to the reading sessions. Kroll was pragmatic: "You're tall, your arms are long. Good violinists are a dime a dozen, but a good violist will always have a job." By the end of the summer, beginning his second year of study at the Mannes School, he was a violist, but he did continue as concertmaster of the orchestra until he was twenty-one.

He subsequently spent a year at Peabody with Kroll, but then asked to return to Mannes. After his schooling came many positions, including principal violist in Buffalo, guest principal violist in Dallas for Mata, and guest principal violist in Baltimore for Commissiona. Then came the important audition for the position of principal violist and assistant conductor with Henry Lewis and the New Jersey Symphony, a position Jesse held for six years. There he received on-the-job training as a conductor, his only other formal training being a month of study with Igor Markevitch and the National Orchestra of Monte Carlo.

Today, Jesse's training has all been brought to bear on his activities as teacher, soloist, and conductor. In

comparing his approach to teaching with that of Kroll, Jesse finds that he trains violists as violinists would be trained. Unlike Kroll, however, Levine does not teach the violin.

### The Practical Side

In keeping with his practical nature, Levine says, "I try to ascertain the deficiencies and weaknesses in my students, to make them fully aware of what they need, and to have them go about it right away." He does believe in scale work, "as a dancer at the bar," and in "sequential and positional playing." In terms of the music business, "business doesn't enter the study room. The realities of the world is another question." He terms it "dangerous to bring the practical into the studio." He does, however, have a master class devoted to careers and audition material.

I asked Jesse how he feels about the viola's need for greater prominence in the profession. He responded, "My positions are too humble to make an impact on this regard; I simply try to do what I can by my own example. Everyone has to make their own way." He did add that he encourages violists to think of themselves as musicians and not just as violists. In his own solo playing, as in his conducting, he strives for this musicianship and spontaneity, "to go with the wind a little bit, to feel free to do it yet again a little differently."

When asked what words he would like to pass on to other violists, Jesse spoke of his enthusiasm for the viola. "Its' songful, soulful beauty as an instrument, coupled with all the effort in the mastery of technique, enables us to play the viola as anyone plays any instrument. Thanks to the great artists who have paved the way, the viola is in better shape than it ever has been before. Instead of one or two models

of the highest standard, we now have small handfuls of models. It is a real renaissance time for the viola, and we all share the same passion."

Jesse Levine is a product of rigorous training that has culminated in a fruitful, busy life. When I asked what he planned to be doing ten years from now, he answered that practical choices were important in his career. He doesn't look ten years ahead, but day to day and year to year. The clear focus of his life is his dedication to being a musician. It was clear to this interviewer that many will be touched and influenced by this dedication.

*Rosemary Glyde received her doctorate of Musical Arts from the Juilliard School under Lillian Fuchs. She was violist in the Manhattan String Quartet and has appeared as soloist with the Houston Symphony and other orchestras. Ms. Glyde is the treasurer of the American Viola Society.■*

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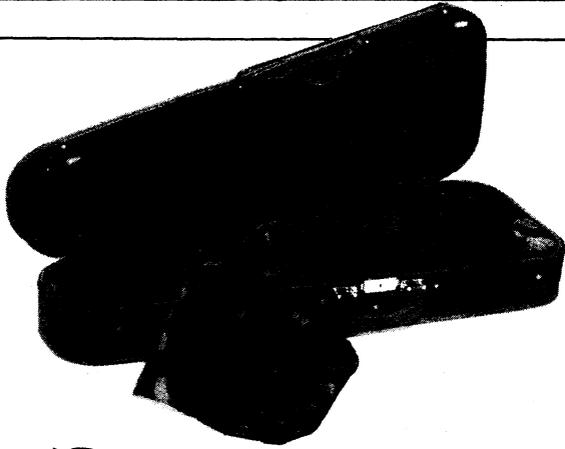
by

MAURICE W. RILEY

The 2<sup>eme</sup> *Concours International d'Alto "Maurice Vieux"* was held 2-7 September 1986 in the beautiful Lille Opera House of Lille, France. Sixteen contestants from Austria, Finland, France, Japan, Norway, Romania, Venezuela, and West Germany entered the competition.

Lars Anders Tomter, Norway, won first prize; Téodor Coman, Romania, and

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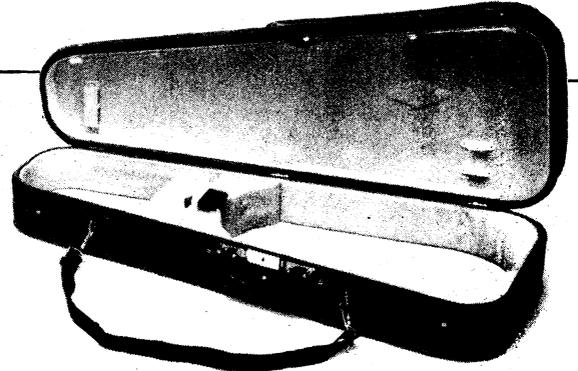


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François Schmitt, France, tied for second prize; and Sabine Toutain, France, received third prize. The latter also won the special prize sponsored by the Conservatoire National de Lille for the best performance of *Étude No. 18* from Maurice Vieux's *Vingt Études pour Alto*.

Concurrent with the performers' competition was a separate competition for contemporary luthiers' violas and an exhibit for archetiers' viola bows. In the viola competition, first prize was awarded for a viola made by Frédéric Becker, of Montpellier, France, and second prize went to Christophe Landon, who lives in Vulaines/Seine, France, and also has a shop in New York City, having worked there in the atelier of Jean François.

The performance competition consisted of three rounds. In the first round, the violists were required to play the 1st, 3rd, and 4th movements of the *Viola Concerto, No. 1* by Darius Milhaud, and the viola version of the *Prelude to the Bach 5th Suite for Cello* (BMV 1011).

Eleven contestants were selected by the judges to compete in the second round. These were required to perform *Episode No. 6* for unaccompanied viola by Betsy Jolas; one of the two Brahms *Sonatas for Viola and Piano, Op. 120*; and a selection of the contestant's choice of five to ten minutes duration.

Six of the preceding contestants were selected by the jury for the final round. Each violist performed three required compositions: *Lachrymae, Reflections on a Song by Dowland, Op. 48*, by Benjamin Britten; *Suite of Dances* by Pierre Max Dubois; and the 18th *Étude* from Maurice Vieux's *Vingt Études pour Alto*.

This final round was with accompaniment furnished by the

Orchestre de Chambre de Lille, conducted by Patrick Fournillier. M. Fournillier conducted these accompaniments with particular sensitivity, adjusting to the style of each performer.

### The Jury

Members of the jury for the Maurice Vieux International Concours were Betsy Jolas, French composer and chairperson of the jury; and conservatory professors and performers of viola: Emile Cantor, Düsseldorf; Claud Ducrocq, Strassbourg; Paul Hadjaje, Versailles; Georges Longree, Brussels; Erwin Schiffer, Amsterdam and Brussels; and Dr. Maurice W. Riley, U.S.A.

The concours was sponsored by the city of Lille and the *Association Internationale des Altistes et Amis de l'Alto*. Serge Collot, Professor of Viola at the Paris Conservatoire, co-president of this organization, was in charge of the programming and the staging of the concours. Paul Hadjaje, secretary of the organization, was responsible for the selection of the jury and the administration of the concours. Assisting Professors Colot and Hadjaje was Albert Azancot, a dedicated amateur violist, who helped with the many problems and details of making the concours run smoothly. Local arrangements for the host city of Lille and its mayor were administered by Philippe Lefebvre, Director of the Conservatoire National de Lille, and by Pierre Host, Secrétaire-Général of the Ministry of Culture for the Region Nord/Pas-de-Calais, France.

Lars Anders Tomter, the winner of First Prize in the performance competition, received the privilege of being awarded any viola he chose from the viola-makers concours. He selected the one made by Christophe Landon. Winners of second and third prizes

were awarded bows of their choice. Tomter was also awarded concert performances with l'Orchestre National de Lille, conducted by Jean-Claude Casadesus, a recital performance at the Conservatoire National de Lille, a recital in Paris, and a performance with l'Orchestra de Chambre de Lille, conducted by Patrick Fournillier.

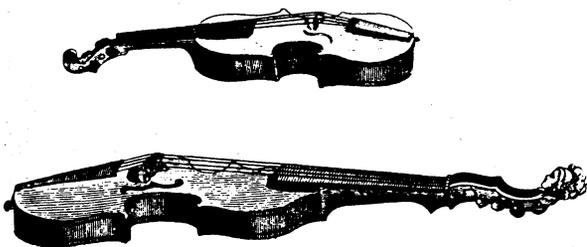
The violists who won prizes demonstrated a very high standard of artistry in their performances, and contributed to making the 2<sup>eme</sup> *Concours International d'Alto "Maurice Vieux"* a worthy tribute to the great French violist and teacher for which it is named.

The III *Concours Maurice Vieux* is tentatively scheduled to be held in March, 1989, in Orléans, France.

*Maurice W. Riley is a just past president of The American Viola Society and professor emeritus of Eastern Michigan University. He is the author of the book The History of the Viola. ■*

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For information contact:

**W. Henry Duckham**  
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# *From the Presidency . . . .*

## IN APPRECIATION

In 1975, I saw an announcement of an international viola congress which was being sponsored in part by the American Viola Society. The host institution was Eastern Michigan University at Ypsilanti, and the announcement carried a picture of the genial looking chairman of the event, Dr. Maurice W. Riley. This was the first inkling that I had received of either a viola society, a viola congress, or Maurice Riley. I thought what a capital idea! Such a gathering of middlemen would be enough to warm Berlioz's heart.

The spirit behind this event would have to be that of the entrepreneur--for the possibility of failure was considerable--and of one who had a good deal of devotion to the instrument. All of us who were at the Ypsilanti congress, the first of the five in North America that were to follow in Rochester, Provo, Toronto, Houston and Boston--were also part of a happy and wonderfully successful occasion. It set a high standard for congresses to come.

I learned that Eastern Michigan University was also planning to give William Primrose an honorary doctorate. I wrote Dr. Riley volunteering a short tribute to Primrose to be presented at an appropriate time if he wanted it. Maurice didn't know me, but accepted the proposal and invited me to deliver it personally. To me, this set the tone of my professional relationship with him since. He has always been trusting and considerate.

I have mentioned devotion and the spirit of the entrepreneur (in the best sense) as characterizing Maurice Riley. But only his family can really know what time and means he has spent in the cause of the viola. There is, for instance, a certain risk involved in writing a book, namely, whether it will ever see the light of day, be read, or compensate the author by a penny. Riley's "The History of the Viola" must have been a labor of love. He didn't entrust this offspring to anyone else. He published and promoted it himself, and he informs me that it will go into a second printing and at least one translation. The gathering of material for this valuable resource to "violafiles" took him to numerous countries and enabled him to meet and interview many of the most prominent persons of our generation associated with the instrument.

In all those travels it would seem that Maurice has been accompanied by his wife, Leila. Or, was it he who was accompanying her? From London and Toronto to Graz and the Isle of Man, I have spotted her colorful hat going before like a flagship of the American delegation, and I knew that the Rileys were there. Red seemed to be the most appropriate and vivid color, i.e., vivid or *vivere* (It.) *to live* (from the same Latin root). Yes, they are very much alive, and have always appeared inseparable, sharing in their own common good: the viola and their family of three sons, all professional string players.

I thank you personally, Maurice, and in behalf of the membership of our society for that which you have brought to our organization during your term as president. In that appreciation we hope that you feel some recompense for your valued contribution.

David Dalton, President

### THE AMERICAN VIOLA SOCIETY, 1976-1986

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve AVS as vice-president under President Myron Rosenblum from 1976 to 1980, and then as president from 1980 to 1985. During this decade the AVS has grown in membership from modest beginnings into a society of over 300 active members. During the last ten years, three important events, in addition to our congresses, have contributed to the ever increasing importance of the AVS as a musical organization: 1) The International Viola Society's Archive was acquired in 1982 from Salzburg, Austria by Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, and absorbed into the Primrose International Viola Archive (PIVA). This archive now houses between 3,000 and 4,000 items. 2) The William Primrose Memorial Scholarship Fund was activated following his death on May 1, 1982. The Fund has a base of over \$10,000 (not including interest). The first award from this fund will be announced by President David Dalton in the present *Journal*. 3) In the last two years our modest *AVS Newsletter*, started in 1973 by Dr. Myron Rosenblum, has gradually developed into a more attractive and scholarly *Journal of the American Viola Society*. Dr. David Dalton, our new president, has had a very prominent part in developing all three of the above projects.

The International Viola Congresses held in the United States and in Canada have done much for the AVS, and more importantly, they have given the viola and violists exposure and deserved prestige. The congresses have also furnished the inspiration and commissions for many new compositions for our instrument.

A successful future for the AVS is assured, with the interest, commitment, and dedication of our new officers, and many other members of our organization. I am very proud to have been an officer in the AVS, and my best wishes go out to the new administration.

Maurice W. Riley, Past President

## THE HISTORY OF THE VIOLA

By

Maurice W. Riley

The first book to deal with all aspects of the viola from ca. 1500 to the present. The instrument, its music, and outstanding violists are discussed and evaluated. The Foreword is by William Primrose. An appendix contains over 300 short biographies of outstanding violists. Over 400 pages of photographs, music, and text.

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# *Of Interest . . . .*

## THE 1987 INTERNATIONAL VIOLA CONGRESS

The ~~XIV~~ International Viola Congress will be held in Ann Arbor on the campus of the University of Michigan, June 16-20, 1987. Yizhak Schotten is the Host Chairman in charge of programming. He invites heads of various chapters of the International Viola Society to the congress.

Artists who will perform and conduct master classes are Toby Appel, Nathan Gordon, Kazuhide Isomura, Patricia McCarty, Donald McInnes, William Preucil, Yizhak Schotten, Emanuel Vardi, Robert Vernon, and Barbara Westphal. Other participants are Heidi Castleman, David Dalton, Louis Kievman, Doris Preucil, Maurice Riley, and Ann Woodward.

The United States Air Force Orchestra, conducted by Lt. Dennis M. Layendecker, will present two evening concerts featuring viola soloists who will perform works by David Finko, J. Francaix, Maurice Gardner, A. Rolla, Heinz Werner Zimmerman and others. The National Arts Chamber Orchestra, directed by Kevin McMahan, will also present a program featuring viola soloists and the winner of the Primrose Scholarship Competition in works for viola and strings.

Two evening concerts will be devoted to rarely performed chamber music which feature the viola in unusual instrumental combinations. Lectures and panel discussions of topics pertinent to viola performance and pedagogy are also planned. Selected college level students will be heard in an orchestral mock audition, and an evaluation discussion by a panel of prominent orchestral musicians will follow each performance.

In addition to exhibits of music, recordings, and books related to the viola, there will be viola and bow exhibits.

For further information regarding registration fees and housing reservations write to:

George Cavender, Coordinator Viola Congress  
600-602 Burton Memorial Tower  
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1270  
Tel. (313) 763-3017

Yizhak Schotten, Host Chairman

*Announcement:* The 1986 Congress, scheduled for September in Parma, Italy was cancelled in August by the Presidency of the International Viola Society

## THE WILLIAM PRIMROSE MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND

The William Primrose Memorial Scholarship Fund continues to grow through the generous gifts of students, friends, and admirers of the late Dr. William Primrose. Recent contributions have been made by:

Louis L. Grand, Highland, New York  
Ann Matthews, Scottsdale, Arizona  
William Preucil, Iowa City, Iowa

Those who have not contributed to the Fund, and those who wish to make a second contribution should sent their gift to:

Rosemary Glyde, Treasurer  
American Viola Society  
P.O. Box 558, Rt. 22  
Golden's Bridge, New York 10526

## PRIMROSE INTERNATIONAL VIOLA ARCHIVE

Recently acquired by Brigham Young University in behalf of PIVA was the phonodisc collection of viola music in the estate of the late Swiss surgeon, François de Beaumont of Neuchatel. It will be recalled that Dr. de Beaumont, a member of the International Viola Society, published in 1973 through Bärenreiter his Viola Discography. Through the widow, Arlette de Beaumont, the collection of over 150 records was appropriated to PIVA inasmuch as David Day, music librarian at Brigham Young University, will continue and expand the de Beaumont Discography. de Beaumont's interest in viola recordings stemmed from his days as a young medical student in Geneva when he heard a performance of the Bartók Viola Concerto by Primrose with the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande under Ansermet. The inspiration of that rendition brought him to the resolution that he would devote part of his time and means to further the appreciation of the viola.

## DISSERTATIONS

From a recent catalog of selected doctoral dissertations from University Microfilms International, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106:

1. The Development and Qualitative Evaluation of a Comprehensive Music Curriculum for Viola, with an Historical Survey of Violin and Viola Instructional Literature from the 16th through 20th Centuries, Including a Review of the Teaching Concepts of William Lincer (Guilford, Eisner)

Kella, John Jake (Ph.D. 1984 New York University) 679 pp. 45/03A, p. 780 MAA84-12343

2. An Analysis of Technical Problems in Twentieth-Century Literature for Unaccompanied Viola

Lebeau, Martin Eldon (D.M.A., 1982 Temple University) 174 pp. 42/12A, p. 4969 MAA82-11206

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*Editor's Note:* Any information pertaining to the viola or violists of general interest can be submitted to the editor for inclusion in the AVS Journal. These contributions and commentary from our readers is appreciated.

# *Competitions . . . .*

## **WILLIAM PRIMROSE SCHOLARSHIP FUND COMPETITION**

To be held in conjunction with the 1987 International Viola Congress  
June 16-20, Ann Arbor, Michigan

This fund was solicited by the American Viola Society from admirers of the late great violist as a memorial to aid viola students who demonstrate outstanding performing abilities.

Three final candidates, selected from submitted taped performances, will be invited to compete for three awards, to be granted at the 1987 Congress. Age ramifications are 18-23 years.

The awards are first prize \$800 and a performance with orchestra at the congress. Two additional prizes of \$300 and \$200 and a performance in a congress master class will also be given.

### Requirements for the Competition Tape

- Repertoire:*
1. An unaccompanied work of about 5 minutes' length, such as, excerpts from J.S. Bach, Hindemith, or Reger.
  2. A first or final movement of a major concerto, such as, Bartók, Hindemith, or Walton.
  3. An accompanied work, 5-10 minutes in length of the candidate's choice.

Deadline for submission of tape to adjudication chairman, Robert Oppelt, is March 15, 1987.

*Entry forms* may be requested at once from:

Viola Competition  
c/o David Dalton  
BYU Music-HFAC  
Provo, UT 84602

## NATIONAL FEDERATION OF MUSIC CLUBS, INC.

### Wendell Irish Viola Award

The Wendell Irish Viola Award was established in 1981 by Mr. and Mrs. Wilmot W. Irish in memory of their son, and to encourage viola students.

Talented young violists who are, or who become, members of the National Federation of Music Clubs as individual (Special) members or through group affiliation may apply for this award.

1. Applicants must have reached their 12th birthday, but not the 19th by March 1st in the year of the auditions.
2. Applicants must be native citizens of the United States or have received naturalization papers.
3. The winner will be determined through auditions held annually.
4. There will be four \$700.00 awards each year, one in each of the four regions of NFMCA, to be used for continued study with the teacher of the recipient's choice.
5. The award will be given in two payments, \$350.00 in the year of the audition and \$350.00 the following year.
6. No entrant may be declared a winner of both the WENDELL IRISH VIOLA AWARD and the STILLMAN KELLY SCHOLARSHIP in the same year.
7. The DEADLINE FOR RECEIVING APPLICATIONS AND TAPES in Michigan is FEBRUARY 1ST.
8. Former winners are not eligible to compete for the Wendell Irish Viola Award a second time.
9. Auditions BY TAPE will be conducted at the State level under the supervision of the state chairman and state president.
10. The monaural cassette tapes must *not* exceed twenty minutes in length.
11. TAPES must be received by the state chairman by February 1st.
12. The Applicant must send to the state chairman by February 1st:
  - a. A copy of his birth certificate or naturalization papers
  - b. Two completed application forms
  - c. Three copies of his repertoire
  - d. A monaural cassette tape not to exceed twenty minutes.
13. The award will be judged by three competent judges who are not associated with the applicants. Performance, musicianship, and outstanding talent form the basis for this award.

Repertoire requirements are in five categories representing Baroque, Classical, Romantic, Contemporary and American. The following list is offered as a guide. This is NOT a required list.

- a. BACH: Two contrasting movements from a Suite
- b. BRAHMS: One movement from one of Brahms, Opus 120 Sonatas
- c. First or Last movement of a work from the Classical or Romantic Periods as: Concerto by Stamitz, Hoffmeister, Berlioz
- d. MOZART: Movement #1 of "Sonatina" in C Major
- e. SCHUMANN: Movement #4 from "Machenbilder"
- f. FERGUSON: "Scherzo" from "Four Short Pieces"
- g. A representative work or portion from the 20th century

- h. A short piece or a movement from one of the concertos or sonatas of Bloch, Bartók, Hindemith, Persichetti, etc.

Mail to your state chairman, National Federation of Music Clubs, Inc.

### TERTIS COMPETITION

The Third Lionel Tertis International Viola Competition and Workshop will take place in the Isle of Man between the dates of August 26th and September 3rd, 1988.

Send for full details after April 1987.

## About Violists . . . .

*Should be "New Works"*

### U.S. PREMIERE OF COLGRASS WORK BY RIVKA GOLANI

In a January, 1985 article in *Musical America*, Robert Markow lauded the premier performance by Rivka Golani of Michael Colgrass's *Chaconne* for Viola and Orchestra. The Toronto Symphony under Andrew Davis collaborated. According to Markow, "Colgrass has proven that good, accessible modern music in an individual idiom is still being written, and one hopes, perhaps even expects, that his *Chaconne* may eventually stand beside the concertos of Bartók, Walton, and William Schuman as one of the finest and most substantial viola works of the twentieth century.

Rivka Golani will be performing the U.S. premiere of *Chaconne* for Viola and Orchestra by Michael Colgrass with the Boston Symphony Orchestra on April 2, 3, and 4, 1987.



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## VIOLA PLUS!

Marlow Fisher is the founder of Viola Plus! which presents concerts devoted to music for viola. In November at a concert in New York City at Christ & St. Stephen's Church, Fisher was joined by assisting artists in a program of American Viola Music:

### Program Highlights

Hymn and Fuguing Tune No. 7	Cowell
Elegy for Viola and Piano	Carter
Andantino from Violin Sonata	Corigliano

*and the New York Premiers of:*

Apparitions for Flute, Viola & Harp	Dennis Riley
Suite for Three Violas	Walter Kaufmann
Duo Sonata for Viola and Bass	Michael Kibbe

Viola Plus! can be contacted at 202 W. 92nd St., #4-F, New York, NY 10025, (212) 580-0237.

## *New Works & Recordings . . . .*

Bruce L. Faulconer, BMI, announces his new viola composition *Fantasia* for solo viola. This work is about 13 minutes long. Its three formal sections alternate in fast, slow, fast sequence. The work is challenging and is expressively diverse in character. A copy of the score can be purchased for \$8.95 from the composer at 4128 Shadow Gables, Dallas, Texas 75252. Faulconer's works have been performed by the Dallas and San Antonio Symphony Orchestras, and he has been awarded several grants.

Robert Cummings, an award winning nationally recognized composer, has completed a composition in three movements for viola and orchestra. It is contemporary in nature and melodic. A review copy can be requested through Lucetta A. Dunn, 888 North Main Street, Suite 808, Santa Ana, California 92701.

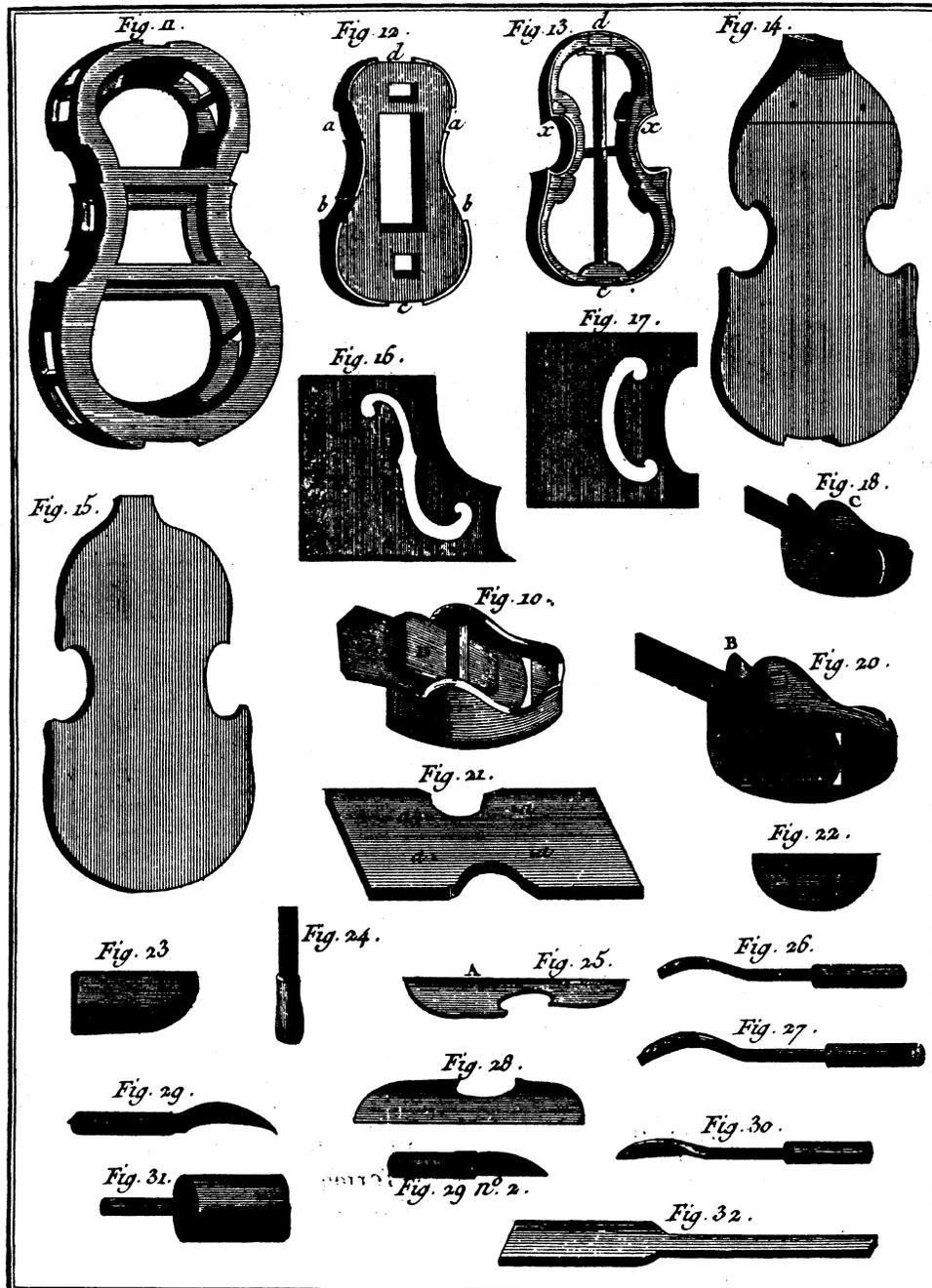
### NEW MUSIC FOR VIOLA

Prelude for Solo Viola from *Benedictus* by Howard Blake. This work, lasting about four minutes, is taken from the composers oratorio *Benedictus*. Bowings and fingerings are by Frederick Riddie who gave the first performance at Worth Abbey in May 1980. Published by Faber Music Ltd., 3, Queens Square, London WC1N 3AU.

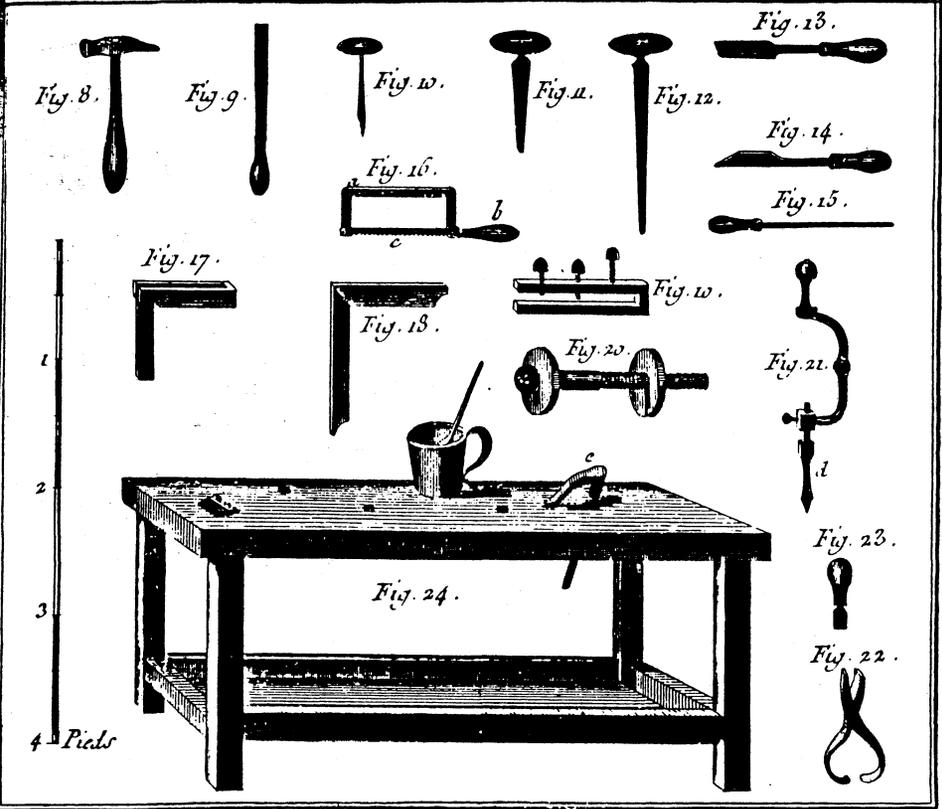
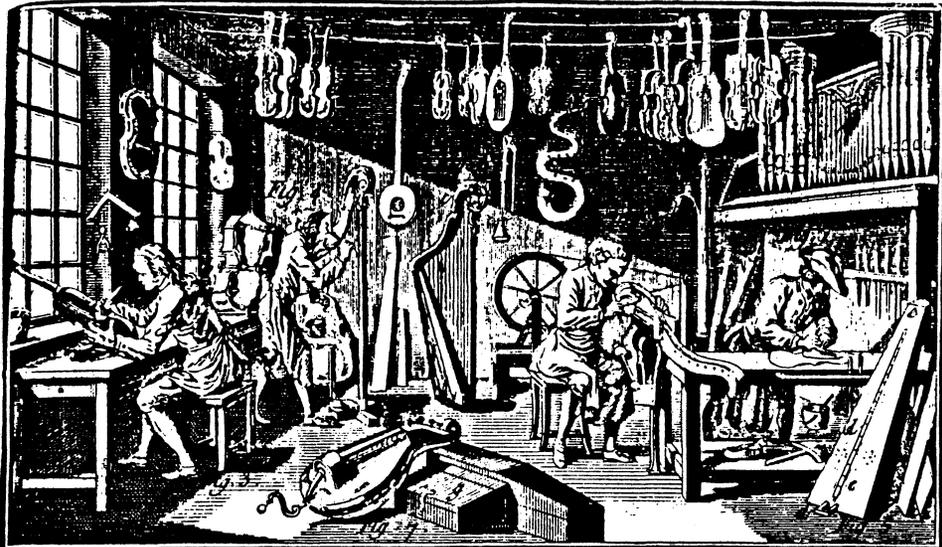
Bosworth 14 - 18 Heddon Street, Regent Street, London W1R 8DP publish a free Thematic Catalogue for their Viola World Series.

Gasparo GS-108CX. An interesting record of duos and trios including Rolla's Concertino for Viola, Cello and Bassoon and William Sydeman (b. 1928) Variations for Viola and Bassoon. The viola player is Virginia Christensen.

Albert Roussel, Trio Op. 40 for Flute, Viola and Cello is included on a record of chamber music on the Gasparo label (No. GS 244) featuring violist Kathryn Plummer, P.O. Box 120069, Nashville, TN 37212.



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