

INTERMISSIONS

JANUARY-FEBRUARY

2008

FEATURED INTERVIEW: GEOFFREY FUSHI

Co-Founder and President of Bein & Fushi Inc., Co-Founder of the Stradivari Society

Geoffrey Fushi, co-founder and president of Bein & Fushi, Inc., universally recognized as one of the world's foremost dealers in rare string instruments, and co-founder of the Stradivari Society, which has arranged for the loan of great instruments to some of the world's greatest string players, recently spent some time speaking with INTERMISSIONS.

INTERMISSIONS: Would you talk a little about your early violin studies?

GEOFFREY FUSHI: I started the violin when I was seven in Chicago Heights, Illinois, where I grew up. My first teacher's name was August Conchetti. He was a good violinist and taught at a local music store. When I was around eleven or twelve, I went to study with a teacher by the name of Louise Butler in Homewood, Illinois. Her husband, Herbert Butler, had been a pupil of Josef Joachim, and was once, I believe, the president of the American Conservatory of Music in Chicago. I was a pupil of Louise Butler up until I was seventeen and joined the Air Force. In addition, I used to go to the University of Illinois Summer Music Camp, where I studied violin with Paul Rolland, the nationally-known teacher, and played in the summer camp orchestra.

INTERMISSIONS: When did you first play in public?

GF: When I was fifteen, I won a competition to perform as soloist with the Chicago Heights Orchestra under John Paris. I played the Bach E major Concerto. There was a local man who lived in Homewood named Dr. David Young, who owned a Stradivari. He was a research chemist at Atlantic Richfield, who became a lifelong friend. Dr. Young had something like 500 patents in his name. He was a really great guy and a very sweet man, and he allowed me to use his Stradivari, "the Artot," for the Bach concerto performance, and I remember getting quite a decent review for the performance. The violin had quite an illustrious history, and in fact, my teacher's husband, Herbert Butler, had played the violin at one time.

INTERMISSIONS: When did you first become interested in rare violins?

GF: Once when I was in seventh grade and was attending the University of Illinois Summer Music Camp, I had a stand partner whose name was Ed Johonott, who had a Gioffredo Cappa violin. It dated something like 1685. And that just fascinated me, so I went to the library at the University of Illinois and read all the books I could find about old fiddles. I read the Hill Stradivari and Guarneri books, for example. So that ignited a life-long interest. Afterwards, I was always interested in instruments and bows, and later Dr. Young introduced me to Harry Benson,



"STEVEN PALINCSAR'S ENTHUSIASTIC KNOWLEDGE OF GREAT VIOLINS, VIOLINISTS, AND OF VIOLIN PLAYING AND TEACHING IS MOST IMPRESSIVE."

– GEOFFREY FUSHI



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who was the president of William Lewis & Son. I used to visit William Lewis & Son, which was then located in Chicago, and was once one of the largest and most important rare instrument dealers in the U.S., as well as having quite a large concession of modern instruments. A couple of times when I had gone in there, I met Nathan Milstein, who was visiting them, and he was a real hero of mine. Milstein, as well as Yehudi Menuhin and Isaac Stern, were customers at Lewis whenever they were in town.

INTERMISSIONS: When did *you* join William Lewis & Son?

GF: Well, I was in the Air Force for a bit first. Then in about 1967, around the age of 21, I got a job at William Lewis & Son. Part of my duties there, outside of sales, included the charting and description of the instruments for the records of Lewis & Son.

INTERMISSIONS: Who else was there at the time?

GF: Well, I got to work on a daily basis with Carl Becker Sr., one of the most important violinmakers and restorers of that time, and Carl Becker Jr., Zenon Petesh, Henry Vallon, and Henry Selinger. They became my friends. Henry Selinger, had been a member of the Chicago Symphony, and was a founding member of the Gordon String Quartet, and taught Jack Benny whenever Benny was in town. Selinger was a true hobbyist, who studied instruments and bows, and schooled me in studying instruments and bows, the great makers, and details of their craftsmanship. Henry Selinger and Carl Becker Sr. were very important teachers to me at the time.

The "King Joseph" Guarneri del Gesù of 1737, one of the great violins in existence, was sold by Geoffrey Fushi in Bein & Fushi's first year in business. Pages 2, 4, and 5 show details of the "King Joseph" del Gesù.

INTERMISSIONS: How long were you with William Lewis & Son?

GF: I worked there from around 1967 through the time that they moved to the suburbs, to Lincolnwood, Illinois, and was with them until 1974, when they closed the shop in the Chicago area. Lewis was owned by the Chicago Musical Instrument Company, which was a large corporation that also owned Gibson Guitars and Story & Clark Pianos.

INTERMISSIONS: What led up to your founding Bein & Fushi?

GF: Well, while I was at William Lewis & Son, Robert Bein would come to buy supplies for a string shop that he ran in Cincinnati. That was how I met Robert, and because of our mutual interest, we became friends, and when he would come to town, we would go out to lunch or dinner.

Robert was a very brilliant fellow, and around 1974 when Chicago Musical Instrument Company was deciding whether to close William Lewis & Son, we talked about opening a shop in downtown Chicago like the one that William Lewis & Son *had* been.

So I left Lewis and went into partnership with Robert Bein. I had talked with Robert about getting space at the Fine Arts Building in Chicago because so many violin teachers had been associated with the Building, and because of its proximity to the Auditorium Theater and to Orchestra Hall. It was just a natural location.

I believe that it was in 1975 that Robert and I drove into Chicago, and we went to the Fine Arts Building. Robert had said that it might be good to find something on the top floor where there might be skylights for the violinmakers to work on retouching violins and that sort of thing. So we arrived on the tenth floor and got out of the elevator



Geoffrey Fushi with Sir Yehudi Menuhin. Menuhin was a regular customer at Bein & Fushi.

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and directly to my right, which is the main entrance of our firm now, there was a sign on the door that said "for rent." "Well, maybe" we said. It took just about that long for us to decide to rent the space. It was around 1,000 square feet or so, not nearly as much space as we have now. After we rented it, my father, who was a carpenter, built the second floor there for extra offices and storage space, and that was pretty much the start of our company, and we've been there for going on thirty-two years.

INTERMISSIONS: What were some of the things that propelled Bein & Fushi into becoming one of the great rare string instrument dealers of our time?

GF: When Robert and I started out, our models were firms like J.B. Vuillaume, Hills in London, Wurlitzer in New York, and

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Lewis in Chicago. We wanted to work with the top artists in the world, handling the greatest instruments, and developing many aspects of the great firms. Those companies had the best modern makers, producing the best instruments and bows, trained the best instrument restorers, and they wrote the literature in the field. Robert concentrated on learning instruments and developing expertise, while I preferred working with top artists and musical activities. So I handled much of the public relations aspects of our business, dealing with artists, and developing the internal organization. So what propelled our firm was really hitting all of the things that made a great shop. We developed relationships with makers, such as John Norwood Lee, who I believe is the best modern bowmaker in the world, and has a better understanding of playing qualities than any other bowmaker that I've ever encountered.

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INTERMISSIONS: After Robert Bein's untimely death last year, how have you managed to reorganize your shop?

GF: We early recognized John Becker as being a brilliant talent. John's now been with us about twenty years. For the last fifteen years, John has worked with Robert studying old instruments and studying the photos that we have, and has really become an expert, in addition to his having become the world's best restorer. Gabriel Ben-Dashan, one of the top salesmen, not only in our shop, but in the field worldwide, has worked very closely with Robert on violin and bow acquisitions, and he is now in charge of this area. So we were really fortunate to develop Gabriel and John so that they together can succeed Robert in these two areas in which Robert was the world's acknowledged expert. And of course, Alec Fushi and Joe Bein continue to be our two top salesmen, Jean Fushi is acting as Office Manager, and Suzanne Fushi continues to serve as Director of the Stradivari Society.

INTERMISSIONS: Would you mention some of the great violinists you've met and served through the years?

GF: Early on, I've gotten my biggest kick out of serving Yehudi Menuhin when I was still with William Lewis & Son. I've worked early on with Isaac Stern too. When we first started our shop, Stern came to us for re-hairs. So did Menuhin, Nathan Milstein, Henryk Szeryng, and Ruggiero Ricci. We've gotten great violins into the hands of Gidon Kremer and Anne-Sophie Mutter. We've worked with the great teachers: Dorothy DeLay, Josef Gingold, Robert Lipsett, and Zakhar Bron. Itzhak Perlman has had some of the great violins over the years, and we've gotten to be real good friends.

I think that since we opened our shop, there were two of the biggest kicks that I've ever

had. Once when Nathan Milstein came into the shop, he said, "Geoff, I'm happy with my Stradivari and my Tourte bow, so I'm not going to be a good customer of yours, but I'd like to come in for a re-hair when I'm here, and I hope that you don't mind if I pay you a visit." I can't explain what that was like except by saying that if I was a high school basketball fan and Michael Jordan came in and told me "I hope you don't mind if I pay you a visit."

When I worked with Ruggiero Ricci, I decided to do this DVD set with Ricci doing master classes and then demonstrating his really revolutionary technique, and we didn't have any big companies behind the production and filming. So I said, well I have a friend in film production at Columbia College and why don't we have him come over with a couple of his students so that we can at least get something on film. So we did that, but it wasn't at the much higher production level that I normally work at, but Ricci said that we really ought to make it available to the public. So it was a long distance from RCA or Deutsche Grammophon or Warner Bros., but any real enthusiast ought to get a real lot from watching it. So when I sent the first set to him, Ricci said, "Geoff, you've done more for me than anyone in my life. You've preserved that what I've done throughout my life will not be lost. You've actually done more for violinists than anyone since Paganini." It touched me so much that I could never have imagined that in my life I would have got compliments like that from my real heroes.

INTERMISSIONS: What were some of the great instruments that have passed through your hands?

GF: Well, the "King Joseph" Guarneri del Gesù was, for me, the most memorable. It really is one of the truly top Guarneris in existence, like the Paganini. I think at about the time, Robert Bein and I had been in

business for about a year, and I was sitting in my office and reading the Hill Guarneri book, Robert came in and asked what I was doing. I said I was just reading the Hill's list of the top ten Guarneri violins, and just fantasizing about which of them I'd love to go after and sell. Robert said, "Well, why don't you do something useful like sell a modern violin so that we can pay the staff." I was a bit insulted, and I thought just wait I'll show you. I thought about the "King Joseph" and the Havemeyers who had owned it. I knew about the Havemeyers because when I was in school, I majored in art history as well as music, and the Havemeyers were tremendously important to French impressionists, and were patrons of Degas and Monet. I had heard that the "King Joseph" del Gesù was still with the family.

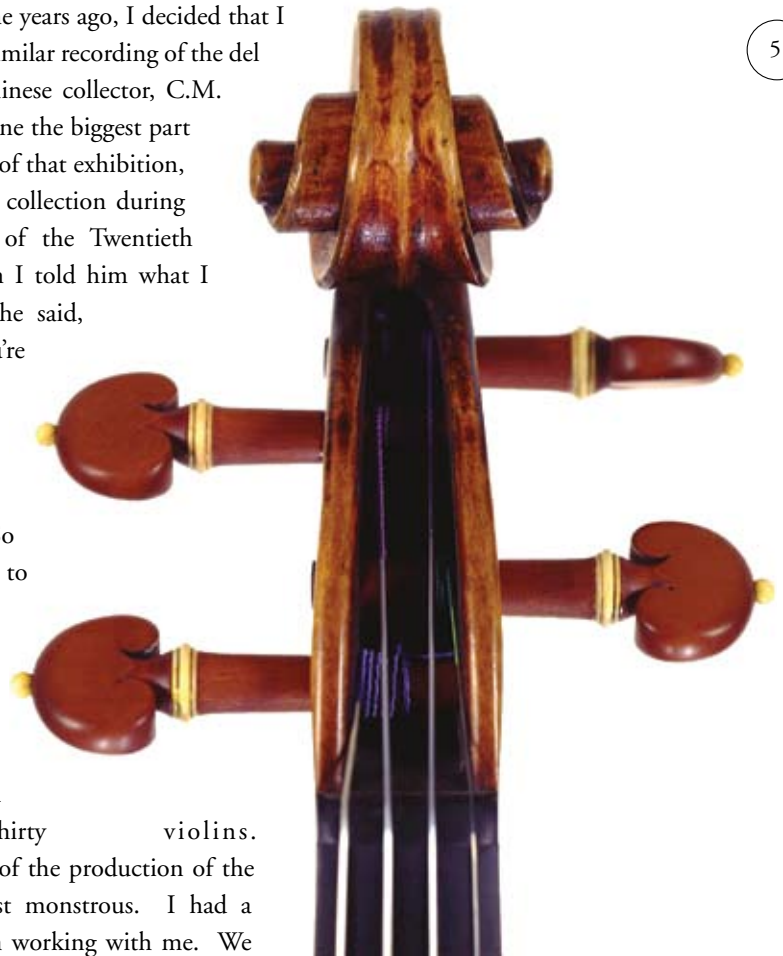
So, I began my search by calling information in New York and asking, "Do you have any Havemeyers listed?" The operator said, "There's one in Brooklyn and one on Park Avenue." Well, because they were enormously wealthy people, I asked for the one on Park Avenue. I dialed the number and an old woman answered, and I said, "Are you Mrs. Havemeyer?" "Yes I am," she said. "Do you own the 'King Joseph' Guarneri?" I asked. "Yes I do," she replied. "Oh you do," I said, and it was a very exciting moment. I said, "Well, I'm doing a book about Guarneri and I'd like to include it, and would you allow us to photograph it?" She said, "Well, you'll have to talk to my son about that. He has an office at the top of the Empire State Building." So, I called her son and I got through to him and asked him if I'd be able to photograph it for our book (which, by the way is still in progress after thirty-two years). He said that he was sure arrangements could be made. At the end of the conversation, I asked him if anyone in the family was playing the violin, and he said no. So I asked if he would consider selling it possibly. He said well I guess anything is for sale. So he requested some references, and I got some together, and sent them to him, and he decided to let me sell it for

him over all the other prestigious firms in the world because in Havemeyer's words, "you're here and they're not." So in our first year of business we were selling one of the very greatest Guarneri del Gesù violins in existence.

INTERMISSIONS: Could you say a few words about your very remarkable book and recording project, *The Miracle Makers*?

GF: *The Miracle Makers* stands out in my mind of things that I've done that I'm really pleased with. When I was a boy, one of my favorite recordings was *The Glory of Cremona*, on which Ruggiero Ricci played fifteen great violins—six Strads, five del Gesù, an Andrea Amati, a Nicolo Amati, a Bergonzi, and a Gasparo da Salo. There was also a comparison record in which Ricci played the opening statement of Bruch's First Concerto on each of the violins. I remember wearing out that LP I played it so much. So when the Guarneri exhibition was taking place some years ago, I decided that I wanted to do a similar recording of the del Gesù. The Chinese collector, C.M. Sin, who had done the biggest part of the financing of that exhibition, had the greatest collection during the latter part of the Twentieth Century. When I told him what I wanted to do, he said, "well Geoff, you're talking about fifteen del Gesù, but you have to have Strads too." So we managed to put together a collection of both del Gesù and Strads for the project, and we had about thirty violins. All the logistics of the production of the project were just monstrous. I had a terrific film man working with me. We

wanted the best sound equipment possible, and I got Mark Levinson to do the sound, and he thought I was crazy. It was the hardest thing I've ever done. We had three days only to do the recording—actually after the equipment set-up, we really had only two and a half days. There were a number of violinists who just told us it was impossible to play that many violins in so short a time, but I finally got Elmar Oliveira to do it. Then on the day the recording sessions were to begin, Elmar Oliveira came down with a fever, but he was completely committed to doing the project, and so he did it. He recorded twelve hours a day for two days. At the last moment, everything came together. We had done it. We had pulled it off. We had assembled all the best people, and we carried off the project, and it's been the most important recording of great fiddles ever.



GEOFFREY FUSHI

The Stradivari Society: An Interview with Its Founder

The Stradivari Society has arranged for the loan of great Stradivari and Guarneri del Gesù instruments to some of the greatest young performers of our time. Joshua Bell, Sarah Chang, Midori, Vadim Repin, Gil Shaham, and Maxim Vengerov, were among those receiving the loan of instruments through wealthy and generous patrons. Geoffrey Fushi, co-founder of the Society, recently spoke with INTERMISSIONS about the Stradivari Society's activities.

INTERMISSIONS: Could you talk a little bit about the Stradivari Society, and how it came into being?

Geoffrey Fushi: In 1985, Dorothy DeLay, the legendary pedagogue at The Juilliard School, came to us at Bein & Fushi with a request:

6 to provide the loan of an outstanding violin for her extraordinarily gifted student, Midori. With the fulfillment of that one request twenty-three years ago, we realized that there were many more promising musicians that might never be able to reach their full artistic potential without the use of such an instrument and The Stradivari Society was born.

You see, a young artist, such as Midori was then, has the talent, dedication, and hard

work to successfully launch a professional career, but this is not enough. A great violin is essential, allowing her and other virtuosi the exceptional sound and flexibility that grants them vast new possibilities of nuance and expression. Unfortunately, the finest masterworks by Stradivari and Guarneri del Gesù have become coveted works of art that sell in the millions of dollars each, well out of the reach of even the most successful performer.

INTERMISSIONS: What exactly does the Stradivari Society do?

GF: We work to bring young virtuoso string players and great instruments together by encouraging philanthropists to purchase the finest Italian instruments for use by today's most accomplished young artists.

The Stradivari Society administers all aspects of instrument loans, insurance, and maintenance, and serves as a liaison between the artist and his/her patron.

INTERMISSIONS: What are some of the violins in the Society's collection, and who are some of the current recipients?

GF: We have prepared a chart for you to

use in *INTERMISSIONS*. It shows the Stradivari and Guarneri del Gesù violins in the Stradivari Society's collection that are currently on loan, the current recipients, and their patrons. Of course, a number of patrons wish to remain anonymous.

INTERMISSIONS: Who were some of the past recipients?

GF: One of the Society's patrons purchased the "Princess de Polignac" Stradivari violin of 1699 for use by the then 17-year-old violinist who had substituted for Itzhak Perlman, on only one day's notice, with the London Philharmonic to great acclaim. As a result of that performance, Gil Shaham's career was launched. Like Midori before him, Gil reached a level of success that enabled him to purchase the "Princess de Polignac" Stradivari from his patron. Grammy Award-winner Joshua Bell benefited from the Society's loan of the "Tom Taylor" Stradivari violin of 1732 until he too was able to purchase this beautiful example from his patron.

Many distinguished teachers and artists have brought their most promising students to the Stradivari Society. Sarah Chang was loaned the "Sennhauser" Guarneri del Gesù violin

VIOLINS	RECIPIENTS	PATRONS
Antonio Stradivari, Cremona, 1689, "Auer"	Vadim Gluzman	Anonymous
Antonio Stradivari, Cremona, 1699, "Lady Tennant"	Xiang Gao	Anonymous
Antonio Stradivari, Cremona, 1703, "Harmsworth"	Kristof Barati	Anonymous
Antonio Stradivari, Cremona, 1708, "Ruby"	Chen Xi	Anonymous
Antonio Stradivari, Cremona, 1708, "Strauss"	Chee-Yun	Samsung Foundation of Culture
Antonio Stradivari, Cremona c 1723, "Kiesewetter"	Philippe Quint	Clement & Karen Arrison
Antonio Stradivari, Cremona, 1727, "Barrere"	Janine Jansen	C. Van Beuningen
Giuseppe Guarneri del Gesù, Cremona c 1725, "Moller"	Kyung-Jun Kim	Samsung Foundation of Culture
Giuseppe Guarneri del Gesù, Cremona, 1735, "Sennhauser"	Emily Hyun	Anonymous



Dorothy DeLay's request to provide her extraordinarily gifted pupil Midori with an outstanding violin was the reason that the Stradivari Society was launched.

of 1735 at the beginning of her career while she was still a student of Dorothy DeLay at The Juilliard School. Ten-year-old Leila Josefowicz, then a student of Robert Lipsett, became a recipient after Society Director Suzanne Fushi heard her in performance. Conductor Daniel Barenboim suggested Israeli violinist Nikolaj Znaider, and Itzhak

Perlman recommended Russian violinist Ilya Gringolts, both of whom became recipients.

The "Ruby" Stradivari of 1708 was acquired and loaned to Joseph Swensen, who became a respected conductor and violinist. Later, distinguished virtuoso Vadim Repin received the loan of the "Ruby" Stradivarius. Violinists Dylana Jensen and Leonidas Kavakos were

also assisted with the use of outstanding Stradivari violins at crucial stages in their development. The Japanese violinist Kyoko Takezawa and the Russian virtuoso Maxim Vengerov, are two more artists the Society was able to help at the advent of their exceptional solo and recording careers.



Sarah Chang was once a recipient of the “Sennhauser” Guarneri del Gesu from the Stradivari Society while she was still a student of Dorothy DeLay at Juilliard.

share with family, friends, and business associates. These performances have ranged from house concerts reminiscent of the salon concerts of the past to concerts at distinguished clubs, legendary performance venues, and special events for charity.

INTERMISSIONS: The Stradivari Society also sponsors master classes too. Who are some of the violinists and teachers who have been invited?

GF: Most recently, Zvi Zeitlin, long-time professor of violin at the Eastman School of Music, presented a master class at the Great Room at Bein & Fushi. Among past artists who have graciously shared their expertise are Salvatore Accardo, Midori, Vadim Repin, Ruggiero Ricci, Aaron Rosand, Gil Shaham, Joseph Silverstein, Joel Smirnoff, Tibor Varga, Donald Weilerstein, and Pinchas Zukerman, as well as such teachers as Zakhar Bron and Robert Lipsett.

INTERMISSIONS: What are some of the latest Stradivari Society activities?

GF: In 1990, The Stradivari Society began presenting a series of recitals each season in Chicago to give further support to its artist-recipients. Recitals featuring Society artists including Kyoko Takezawa, Maxim Vengerov, and Vadim Repin, have been held in Chicago, New York, Washington D.C., Los Angeles, Beijing, London, Tokyo, and other important international music centers. More recently, we have begun presenting a series of monthly recitals at the Women’s Athletic Club in downtown Chicago. Recent

INTERMISSIONS: How are recipients selected?

GF: Recommendations of possible recipients are given to the Society by respected pedagogues and musicians. We then contact the potential recipients for further information and to see if they are interested in the terms of a loan.

INTERMISSIONS: What is required of Society recipients?

GF: An agreement is drawn up for an initial period of one year. The artist is required to

pay the insurance on the instrument (and so must be able to earn enough to afford the insurance - a not inconsiderable sum). The Stradivari Society’s curator, restorer John Becker, must inspect the instrument three times a year — *no other violin maker is allowed to work on the instrument without permission.* The last requirement is that the musician plays three concerts per year for the patron, whether in a private home, for a fundraising event, or another special occasion.

The concerts provide once-in-a-lifetime musical experiences which the patron can

recipients Kristof Barati, Joan Kwon, and Philippe Quint are among the artists who have performed there this season. Midori will appear as a special guest on the series later this year.

In 2002, we were invited to the Chinese “White House,” called Zhong Nan Hai, where Stradivari Society recipient, Lu Siqing performed. For Lu, the command performance for his country’s top leaders was one of the high points of his career. The afternoon began with a lecture that I presented on the tonal qualities of great instruments. Lu then performed with the China Film Symphony Orchestra conducted

by Chen Xieyang and accompanied by pianist Huang Mengmeng. The program blended classics of east and west and included *Spring of Xinjiang* by Ma Yaozhong and Li Zhonghan, *Longing for Home* by Ma Sicong, Han Tiehua’s *Why Are the Flowers So Red?*, the *Butterfly Lovers* Violin Concerto, the Monti *Csardas*, *Zigeunerweisen* by Sarasate, and Vivaldi’s *Four Seasons*.

“President Jiang’s love for music showed when he actually sang while I played *Longing for Home* again. I will always remember this moment,” said Lu. The President was especially interested in the exceptional sound of the “Wieniawski” del Gesù and asked

that Lu play close to him so that he could appreciate its tonal qualities. Along with Mary Galvin, Motorola China Chairman Tim Chen, and Vice President Jenny Wang, I was among the very few to have been invited to this unique event. As special thanks for the Society’s support of Lu Siqing through the years, President Jiang presented Mary Galvin and me with beautifully illustrated books on Chinese painting from Shanghai that were themselves works of art.

Grammy Award-winner Joshua Bell benefited from the Stradivari Society’s loan of the “Tom Taylor” Stradivari until he was able to purchase it from his patron. He now plays the “Gibson, Ex-Huberman” Stradivari.



IN CONVERSATION

STEVEN PALINCSAR ON VIOLIN TEACHING

Due to the overwhelming response from students and orchestra directors for more reprints of the In Conversation article from the December issue of INTERMISSIONS, it is being reprinted in this issue.

QUESTION: In the November issue of *INTERMISSIONS*, it was announced that you and a colleague, Margaret Pressley from Seattle, have been invited to present a program on “College/University/Conservatory Audition Preparation” for the 2008 American String Teachers Association National Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Could you say a few words about auditions?

STEVEN PALINCSAR: I’d be glad to. Well, the first thing that might shock some students is that if they have waited until now to begin their preparation for this year’s music school auditions, they have minimal chances for success. Audition preparation is more of a science than an art. Students need to do everything they can to maximize their chances of acceptance, and beginning their preparation as early as possible is the best thing they can do.

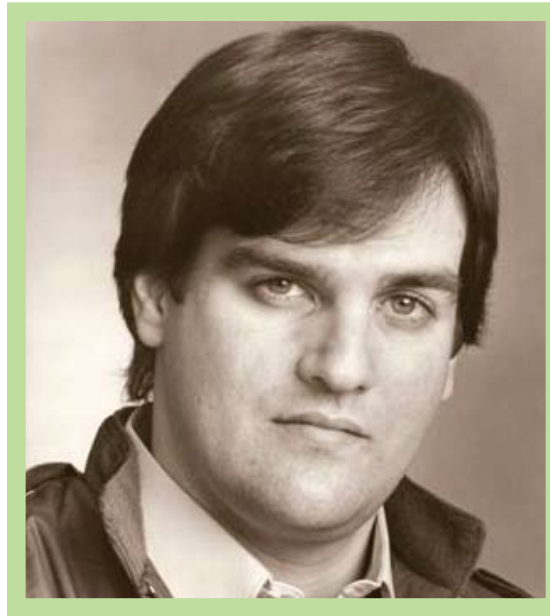
QUESTION: When do you begin to prepare your students to audition for schools such as Juilliard, Curtis, Eastman, or Northwestern?

SP: From the very first lesson they have with me.

QUESTION: Are you serious?

SP: Absolutely. My job as a violin teacher is to bring my students to as near a professional level as possible by the time they walk into the audition, and to nurture and develop their love for music and the violin.

I begin by assessing their strengths and weaknesses, and work to nurture their strengths and to eliminate their weaknesses. In effect, I help them to convert their weaknesses into strengths. You know, in my opinion, there is no excuse for a student to play out of tune or out of rhythm at an audition. None. The tonal quality should be absolutely gorgeous, and the musicianship impeccable.



Furthermore, the student should be completely comfortable at the audition. No matter what unexpected events may occur, they must perform at their absolute peak.

Over the years that a student studies with me, I keep an eye out for pieces that the student has mastered that may later be performed at an audition. So, assuming the student goes to high school for four years, we will already have the entire audition repertoire selected and mastered by the beginning of the junior year. Then we work for the next year and a half to perfect the performance, and to master audition technique.

You see, at the audition, the student has an incredibly short time to demonstrate that she/he has what it takes to succeed at a school like Juilliard. At most *thirty* seconds. *Probably nearer to five or ten seconds!* The decision has already been made in that first impression. The rest of the audition is merely a confirmation of the audition committee’s first impression. So if a student needs a few minutes to get it together, they’re out of luck. And that’s that.

QUESTION: So you prepare all your students for a career in music?

SP: Well, no, not really. The impetus for a life in music must come from the student. If

they choose to go to the University of Illinois as a pre-med, that’s up to them, but they will have the necessary preparation if they want to put it to use.

QUESTION: What happens once a student decides they want to pursue a career in music?

SP: I sit down with the student and his/her parents, and we talk about what they will need to do.

QUESTION: Do you ever try to talk a student out of a career in music?

SP: Absolutely not. Not under any circumstances. Nor do I ever try to encourage a student to go into music as a profession. The decision must always be entirely theirs. Most students know pretty much by about middle school or early high school what they want to do.

QUESTION: What do you do next?

SP: I give the student a hand-out that I prepared on how to research potential schools, and a research form for them to fill out.

QUESTION: What does it contain?

SP: Questions on repertoire, faculty, facilities, living accommodations, contact information, tuition, scholarship procedures, etc., etc. The student must do the research for each school they’re thinking about, and bring me a completed form with all the information as soon as possible. I need to know about any specific repertoire requirements for example.

QUESTION: Do you encourage your students to apply to specific schools?

SP: Never. I am not an admissions counselor. The student must choose what schools to apply to. Then I assist the student in planning and preparing for the audition.

QUESTION: What if you believe the student has no chance of getting accepted to the school of their choice?

SP: It's my job to make sure the student is as prepared as he or she can possibly be, and to provide the student with my absolute faith, commitment, and support.

I will say this, however. If a student is set on a specific teacher, and that teacher has faculty positions at more than one school, I might recommend applying to the other schools as well, but that's as far as I will go.

For example, Dorothy DeLay taught at Juilliard, but also taught at the University of Cincinnati, so many kids could go study with her there. Victor Danchenko teaches at Curtis, which is out of reach for most kids, but he also teaches at Peabody, which for my students is not a stretch at all.

I also try if possible to get a student to study in the summer with a teacher that they may like so that they can connect together. Sometimes, a kid comes back after summer studies and says she doesn't want to study with that teacher anymore. It's rare, but it happens.

QUESTION: Once the repertoire is prepared, do you begin work on the audition itself?

SP: No. You see, my students play in a weekly studio class in addition to their private lessons, and I use the class to prepare kids for auditions, competitions, solo and chamber recitals, and concerts with orchestra. So really my kids have already had a number of years working on the audition itself, and have developed contingency plans to deal with almost every possible problem.

QUESTION: Could you talk a little about your studio class as it relates to auditions?

SP: Absolutely. Well, the first thing I try to do is to create an environment where students can be comfortable enough to perform for each other. In the beginning, I allow absolutely no criticism of a student's performance. Not by me, not by the kids, not by parents, not by guests, not by anyone. I insist that everyone applaud as the student gets up to perform. Sit quietly while they play. Then applaud after each performance. Next, everyone in the room must pay the student a compliment. No criticism is permitted. No

suggestions of something the student might work on. Just a compliment. One thing that they liked. I start each year this way, even if the kids all know each other and have studied this way a number of years.

We also work on how to accept a compliment even if completely undeserved in our opinion. Kids are taught to be gracious and polite, and to say something like "Thank you, I'm glad you enjoyed the performance."

When I judge that *each* student is ready for it, I ask for a couple of suggestions from the students for something that the performer might work to improve. I usually choose kids who are more advanced players to make the suggestions. Then we talk about these suggestions as a group to determine whether they are important or just interpretative. I never ask for more than three per class. At the private lesson, I can always add one more if needed.

If a student has a problem in the middle of the performance (for example a memory lapse), I work through it with them, and we develop a contingency plan. Something that the student can fall back on if someone drops a folding chair at the audition. We try to brainstorm everything that can possibly go wrong at the audition or performance. I teach the students never to stop the performance even if they are frustrated, angry, or about to cry. I tell them that it's quite likely at a performance only the performers know that anything was wrong. I remember that I had a friend who played what we both thought was a disastrous performance of a Mozart Concerto. Afterwards, members of the audience kept coming backstage to praise his playing over and over again. Even if the whole audience is full of musicians, we must never stop, and must never lose our cool.

During the year, we also talk about goal-setting, and how to break down a goal into bite-sized pieces. I normally do most of this for the student, but one of my goals is to teach each student how to become completely independent of me, in effect to become their own teacher.

I frequently invite guests, prominent musicians, to whom I give evaluation forms similar to those used by audition committees.

Guests turn the forms into me only, and do not share their comments with the student directly or the class. The comments are filtered through me, the teacher. You see, not every comment is helpful, and some are even destructive.

QUESTION: What happens once a student plays the audition?

SP: I insist that the student write a thank-you note to the jury, and then I help the student to move on to the next audition. If the student receives a rejection letter, I ask them to bring it to the lesson, and we talk about it together.

QUESTION: Do you ever try to contact the jury?

SP: Only if I am close friends with someone on the audition committee. Otherwise, never.

QUESTION: How many of your kids usually get accepted to Juilliard, Eastman, Indiana, or Curtis?

SP: It depends on so many factors. If Curtis for example only has room for two students, it's highly unlikely that a kid will get accepted there. Also, the character of an audition committee can (and does) change over time. I need to be up on what changes have occurred. Some schools no longer want to hear romantic concerti, but prefer only 20th century works (such as Bartok or Prokofiev). We need to network with faculty. We can't have an us vs. them attitude. As a violin teacher, I am providing a service not only to my students, but to the schools as well. So how many kids get accepted? They *all* do. In fact, every student I've ever prepared has gotten in at least somewhere. Cream always seems to rise to the top.

PHOTO CREDITS

Matthew Tolzmann: Page 1 portrait of Fushi, page 12 photo of Rugeri.

Courtesy of Bein & Fushi: Page 2, 4, and 5 photos of "King Joseph" del Gesù, page 3 photo of Menuhin and Fushi.

Lois Greenfield : Page 7 portrait of Midori. Cliff Watts : Page 8 portrait of Chang.

Bill Phelps : Page 9 portrait of Bell.

Tom Fezzey: Page 10 portrait of Palincsar.

GEOFFREY FUSHI

How to Choose a Violin and Bow: Advice from One of the World's Foremost Experts

GF: When you get into a really expensive violin or bow, you have to feel good about the expertise of the shop. You need to really trust the background of the people that you're dealing with.

If a person has a given price range in mind, that's the first thing they need to determine. The price range really nails it down. The other factor for a violinist obviously ought to be the sound. The sound is very important, and whether what you're looking for is suitable for a concert hall. Many times people have a different taste than would be suitable for the concert hall. Students need to be advised by their teacher in this. Top professional players look for an extremely projective instrument. Often with projection comes a bright or sharp, incisive top end, with a "cut" to the sound. More like the treble or soprano of a good set of speakers. Del Gesù have that incisive cut across all the registers. Also, a really deep bass is important.

When you get to a bow, there is the feel of the bow in your hand, the comfort of it, the balance. Next of course is the strength. Modern students generally go in the direction of a bow being very strong. So there's balance and strength, and then sound. The player needs to experience going from one bow to the next, and the different sounds that are drawn from the violin with each. I would say that strength and resilience are quite important. Sartory bows have a much stiffer stick and are not resilient like a Tourte. However, a Tourte with its resilience will react quickly; produce a sound that a really stiff bow could never do—a sound with overtones



This fine Francesco Rugeri violin was made in Cremona, Italy around 1663. The violin is among the current offerings at Bein & Fushi.

that the early French bowmakers went for. You do have to play the earlier French bows more tightly (i.e. with more tension).

Then of course, once again, there's the price range. The earliest French bows are of course

the most expensive (\$40,000 to \$250,000), then even the later bows such as those by Sartory are in the \$20,000 to \$30,000 range. Of course, English bows are much less expensive. There are also some fine bows from modern makers such as John Norwood Lee.