



1700 Bell Giovanni Tononi violin

This fine violin was made by Giovanni Tononi in Bologna, Italy, around 1700. Tononi was born in Bologna around 1640 and died in 1713. He studied under his father, Felice Tononi. Giovanni Tononi produced violins of a very high quality, both in terms of workmanship and sound. His skill surpassed many of his contemporaries and equaled some of the finest makers of his era.

Justice R.D. Bell, a music lover and philanthropist, donated the violin to the Canada Council in December 2002.

The instrument is a two piece back of slab cut maple and displays faint figure. The ribs and scroll being quarter cut, displays stronger figure. The two piece top is mostly medium width straight grain and the varnish is of a reddish brown over gold.



1715 Dominicus Montagnana violin

This fine violin was created by Dominicus Montagnana, one of the greatest Venetian violin-makers of the eighteenth century, and it is a rare and noted example of his work. The history of this violin's ownerships is known from the latter half of the nineteenth century: it passed through the hands of Hart & Son; radio pioneer and violin enthusiast Guglielmo Marconi; R. A. Bower Esq.; violin virtuoso Albert Sammons; and violin soloist, composer and professor Percival Hodgson. There are various letters about the instrument that testify to its outstanding tonal properties, and it was illustrated in *The Strad* magazine in June 1912, along with an article by well-known violin expert, and author, Towry Piper. It has also been featured in articles in the *Violins and Violinists* magazine.

The instrument is a two piece back of irregular figure. The ribs are of matching material and the scroll being plain. It has a two piece top of narrow grain, widening at the flanks and the varnish is of rich brown over golden ground.



1717 Windsor-Weinstein Stradivari violin

This instrument, made in 1717 by Italian violinmaker Antonio Stradivari, has been in the possession of a number of collectors and noted violinists.

Prior to the outbreak of World War II, the violin was owned by an English astronomer (Rankin), from whom Victor S. Fletcher purchased it. Mr. Fletcher brought the violin to New York and sold it to Felix Kahn. Violinist Sascha Jacobsen acquired the violin subsequently, and used it for many years in concerts and as first violin of the famous Musical Art Quartet. In 1943, Jacobsen sold the violin, to violinist Paul Fite of Missouri. In 1954, the instrument was bought by Robert West and by Leon E. Weinstein in 1961. The violin was played by Mr. Weinstein in his famous duets with Sam Shopsowitz. Other violinists who have played this violin include Steven Staryk, Philip Frank, Maurice Solway, Andrew Dawes, and Lorand Fenyves.

In 1980, Mr. Weinstein donated the Stradivarius to the Ontario Heritage Trust in the hope of starting a collection of great musical instruments to be made available to outstanding Canadian musicians who would not otherwise have the opportunity to play them. The Stradivarius was generously transferred to the Canada Council for the Arts at a ceremony in November 1988 at Roy Thomson Hall, where it was also presented to the first winner of the national juried competition for its loan.

The instrument has a two piece back which displays a strong figure descending from the the centre joint. The ribs and scroll are made of matching materials. The two piece top is mostly medium width grain, widening at the flanks. The lower left wing being added by the maker. The varnish is of a red brown colour over amber.



1747 Palmason Januarius Gagliano violin

This fine violin was made by Januarius Gagliano in Naples in 1747. Gennaro (or Januarius in the latin form found on his labels) was part of a large violin-making family in Naples. The family proved to be intelligent, versatile craftsmen who were open to developments outside their native city, and who also possessed of a technique and style that was unique.

In 1895, W.E. Hill & Sons of London sold the violin to John A. Brown, Esq. In 1938, it was sold to Jean Klein of Geneva, Switzerland. Pearl Palmason of Toronto purchased the instrument in 1960 when she was a member of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and loaned it to the Canada Council in 2003. Pearl Palmason, one of the first women in Canada to pursue a career as an orchestral player, was born in Winnipeg in 1915 to parents who had emigrated from Iceland. At the age of nine she was, as she puts it, "hooked on the violin." She studied under the renowned Carl Flesch in London, England, and under D. E. Dounis in New York City.

After her death, the anonymous heir of the violin, continued the loan.

The instrument back is of one piece and displays broad figure, descending from left to right. The ribs and scroll are of similar material. The two piece top has narrow grain widening at the flanks. The varnish is of a rich golden colour over amber.



1768 Miller Januarius Gagliano violin

This violin bears the original label by its maker, Januarius Gagliano. Gagliano came from a family of luthiers based in Naples, Italy. The family patriarch, Alessandro Gagliano, is thought to have worked in Cremona with his contemporary Antonio Stradivari. This violin is characteristic of Gagliano's work and is in an excellent state of preservation.

The instrument has a two piece back which displays a lovely ascending slightly fugue from the centre joint. The ribs and scroll are of similar materials. The two piece top displays medium width straight grain. The varnish is a golden brown over amber.



1820 Joannes Franciscus Pressenda violin

This violin is considered the first known instrument made by nineteenth century violinmaker Giovanni Francesco Pressenda of Turin, Italy. The instrument has a two piece back of slightly burlled maple, being cut off the quarter. It displays narrow figure ascending slightly from the centre joint. The rib material is made to match and the scroll is of a similar material. The two piece top, displays medium width grain widening at the flanks. The varnish is a reddish brown over amber. It is in a very fine state of preservation and remains in nearly the same state it was when it left the master's hands almost two hundred years ago.

For many years, the instrument was in the possession of Remo Bolignini, a pupil of Ysaÿe. A native of Buenos Aires, Bolignini was assistant concertmaster of the NBC Symphony and, subsequently, of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra.



1869 Jean Baptiste Vuillaume violin (with Vuillaume model bow)

This violin was made in Paris, France by Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume at the zenith of his career. The violin bears the master's signature on the inside upper back, as well as his number and brand stamp. The violin and the bow that accompanies it are in near mint condition.

The violin's two-piece back of select maple displays a strong figure descending from the centre joint. The ribs and scroll are of matching materials. The one piece top of select spruce, displays narrow straight grain at the treble bouts to wide grain at the bass bouts. The varnish of red brown over amber begins somewhat shaded by the maker and displays lovely orange peel texture throughout. The bow is a round stick of select Pernambuco and displays an ivory tip. The ebony frog displays pearl eyes and silver mounts. The ebony button displays a silver cap and silver ring.

The owners inherited the violin from Greg Cook's maternal grandfather, Aden Hurst, who was believed to have been born around 1880.



1871 Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume violin

Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume of Paris—one of the best luthiers of his era—made this violin. The violin bears the master's signature on the upper back as well as his number and brand stamp, markings which indicate the maker's highest level of quality. The violin is in near mint condition and is an exact copy of the famed 1716 Antonio Stradivari, known as the "Messiah" or "Messie," that Vuillaume brought out of Italy after the death of its owner, Luigi Tarisio, in 1854. The previous owner acquired the violin from the renowned shop of Jacques Français, *Rare Violins*, in New York in the 1970s. Français had brought the violin to America after having discovered it in France, where it had been in a vault for eighty years. Français attributed the violin's exceptional condition in part to its long period of internment. More recently, in 2001, it was rescued from a house fire in which the owner lost all other personal belongings.

The instrument has a two-piece back of exceptional maple and displays a strong figure throughout. The ribs and scroll are of matching materials, and the maker of the violin has blackened the chamfers of the scroll. The two-piece top of select spruce, displays medium width straight grain, widening somewhat at the flanks. The maker has slightly antiqued the varnish of reddish brown over a golden ground, which displays a lovely orange peel texture.

The violin bears the master's signature on the inside upper back, as well as his number and brand stamp.



1900 Stefano Scarampella violin

Stefano Scarampella—a luthier based in Mantua, Italy, and one of the more important makers of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries—made this violin. This instrument was made at the zenith of Scarampella's career. It is in excellent condition and boasts a rich sound quality. In recent years, the violin has been loaned for numerous performance concerts, quartet, and orchestral work.

Unlike many great violin makers, Scarampella did not become a professional violin maker until his late-thirties. He was born into a poor family in Sant' Alessandro, Brescia, and initially found a vocation as a joiner. His father, Paolo (1803–1870), was an amateur violin maker, and his elder brother, Giuseppe (1838–1902), refined his violin-making skills in Paris before he settled in Florence. At the end of the nineteenth century, both Brescia and Mantua had lost their great violin-making schools and so Scarampella attained his impressive violin-making results in near-isolation from the profession.

The violin's two-piece back of select maple, displays a strong narrow figure. The ribs are of matching material. The select maple scroll displays similar figure. The two-piece spruce top is of mostly medium width straight grain. The varnish is of a reddish brown colour over an amber base.



1689 Baumgartner Stradivarius violin

This early period Stradivarius was acquired by Gordon Jeffrey from Robert Masters, the concertmaster of the Bath Festival Orchestra (England) during Yehudi Menuhin's tenure as conductor. The instrument was used in many recordings made by the Orchestra under Menuhin's direction. Étienne Périlhon, of Paris, owned it in the early 1950s, followed by P. Nicholson of Folkestone, England, in the early 1960s. In 1963, Mr. Fritz Baumgartner of Basel, Switzerland, acquired the violin. In 1986 Gordon Jeffrey, a great patron of music and scion of the family that founded London Life Insurance Company, bequeathed it to the University of Western Ontario, from which an anonymous donor purchased it in 1997.

The instrument is a two piece back of select maple and displays a strong figure. The ribs are of matching materials and the scroll is of similar materials. It has a two piece top of narrow grain, widening at the flanks. The varnish is of an orange brown colour.



Carlo Tononi violin 1757

The 1757 Carlo Tononi violin was created by Carlo Antonio Tononi, of Venice, Italy, the third generation of a family of renowned luthiers (father was Pietro Tononi, grandfather was Carlo Tononi of Bologna, Italy).



1750 Carlo Ferdinando Landolfi violin

Master luthier Carlo Ferdinando Landolfi of Milan, Italy, crafted this violin. It was made at the zenith of his career, around the same time his great contemporary G.B. Guadagnini was based in Milan. Landolfi was known for his beautiful varnishes, and this violin bears a fine reddish brown varnish, richly applied over an amber base. The one-piece back displays a strong narrow figure. The ribs and scroll are of similar materials. The two piece top, of mostly medium width grain, displays a touch of hazeling at the upper bass bout. The instrument is in remarkable condition and its voice has a clean and focused core that easily reaches the back of a concert hall.



1902 Enrico Rocca violin

Enrico Rocca made this violin in 1902 at the zenith of his career. Rocca was born in Turin in 1847, and later lived and worked in Genoa. He studied with his father Giuseppe, who died in 1865 when Enrico was 17. Rocca's early violin models are nearly identical to his father's final Stradivari model, that of the 'Messiah.' He also finished some of his father's instruments following the latter's death, but struggled to establish himself as a maker and instead worked as a carpenter and day laborer in Genoa's shipyards. He finally returned to violin making some fifteen years later, and opened his own workshop in 1880.

The instrument's two-piece back displays lovely irregular figure, descending from the centre joint. The ribs and scroll are of matching material. The two-piece top is of narrow grain, widening slightly at the flanks. The varnish of light orange-brown over amber displays *craquelure* throughout. The maker has blackened the chamfers of the scroll and rib corners.



1700 Taft Stradivarius violin

This fine violin is characteristic of the early part of Antonio Stradivari's golden period—which lasted from about 1700 to 1725. This violin is said to have been in the possession of Albert Caressa, of Paris, who passed it to Rudolf Wurlitzer in Cincinnati, Ohio. Around 1915, Mr. Wurlitzer sold the violin to Mrs. Charles Phelps Taft, one of the founders of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, and wife of Cincinnati philanthropist Charles P. Taft (brother of William Howard Taft, the 27th President of the United States of America). Mrs. Taft presented the violin to Emil Heermann, the concertmaster of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, for his use. Following the death of Mr. Taft, in 1940 the violin was sold to the private collector and amateur violinist Ernest Ruder, of Cincinnati, where it remained until 1987, at which point it was sold by Jacques Français to its current owner.

The instrument is a one piece back that displays strong figure descending from left to right. The ribs and scroll are of matching materials. The two piece top of narrow grain widens somewhat at the flanks. It displays hazeling at the upper left bout and has a varnish of orange red colour over amber.



Violin by Giuseppe Guarneri del Gesù, 1744 ex “Ole Bull”

The son of Giuseppe Guarneri filius Andrea (1666–1740), Giuseppe Guarneri del Gesù is usually referred to as Guarneri del Gesù. He was reputed as the greatest violinmaker since Antonio Stradivari, and was well trained by his father and brothers, showing exceptional talent from an early age.

Guarneri worked together with Carlo Bergonzi in his father’s workshop before the age of 24, and later set up his own violin-making business in 1723. Between 1726 and 1730, he expanded his learning by adopting the violin style of Stradivari and the curvy violin shape of Maggini, and applied a darker layer of lacquer over a light-yellow base color. From 1729 onwards, Guarneri began to mark his violins with the letters “IHS” and a cross symbol. It was believed that Guarneri was a devout Catholic, and that he used the name “Guarneri del Gesù” to distinguish himself from his father.

Guarneri’s work reached the peak of perfection after 1730, the point at which he developed his own personal style. The structural design of his violins was outstanding and highly innovative. During the Golden Period between 1730 and 1735, Guarneri made many large violins, reflecting his creativity and courage for experimental challenges. The violins that he made a few years before his death are coarser and simpler in style with the sound still full of power; the axe marks shown on these violins reveal Guarneri’s distinctive personality. During the 14 years from his career peak until his death, Guarneri had produced numerous versatile and innovative violins that have become collector’s items today, ranking

alongside the works of Stradivari as some of the finest violins ever made.

In terms of uniqueness in technique, Guarneri focused primarily on the development of large, solidly-built violins that bore a rich and deep timbre. His violins had a flattish body, with a longer C-peg and an outstanding structure. The elegant F-holes are somewhat wider than the norm, and the tracery is relatively close to the edge of the sound box. Guarneri violins have a particularly bright sound, more powerful and vigorous than a Stradivari violin. As a result, they are more favored by some leading violinists. Guarneri del Gesù's violin-making career lasted only two decades; he had neither offspring nor apprentices to follow his footsteps. Experts believe that he made around 200 violins in his lifetime, among which no violas or cellos were made, and only about 150 violins remain today.

The Guarneri used in this recording has a deep, booming sound. Made in 1744, this violin is believed to be the last work by Guarneri del Gesù.

This particular instrument once belonged to the famous Norwegian violinist, Ole Bull (1810–1880). Bull was a leading figure in the Norwegian nationalist movement. His promotion of Norwegian music won him the status of national hero, and he is even regarded as the country's founding father. This Guarneri was his most beloved instrument, and has been named after him. Subsequent owners included James Goding, C. H. C. Plowden, Frederick Lehmann, and Uto Ughi.

Taiwan's Chi Mei Foundation acquired the "Ole Bull" in 1992. With its smooth, arched shape, it has the full sound of a Guarneri and the sonorous tone of the Cremona tradition. The violin, which bears the label of the original maker, is 35.2 cm long, with the back made from two pieces of maple-wood lacquered in yellow-orange color.

This Guarneri has been lent to several overseas museums, including the Metropolitan Museum in New York, Norway's National Museum, and the Music Museum in Paris. It has also been used in Norwegian films and TV programs in commemoration of Ole Bull. The historic importance of this violin cannot be undervalued.



Violin by Antonio Stradivari, 1722 ex “Joachim-Elman”

The violin Joachim-Elman was made in 1722. By this time, Stradivari had already attained a high level of maturity in his technique, but he was still continuously working to refine the details of the violin appearance and curvature, trying to achieve a more sturdy structure and a fuller sound. Despite the differences in the handling of the curvature and details that differentiated his style from earlier works, the overall form still retains the standard proportion that Stradivari had established in 1704.

The violin bears the label of the original maker, although the date has faded slightly. At 35.4 cm in length, the violin has a broad and shallow grain on the two-part back, with a slightly downward slope from the central seam. The central portion of the front has a medium grain, which grows coarser towards the edges. The medium-width grain spreads throughout both sides and the head of the instrument.

This instrument was once owned by the Romantic Hungarian violinist Joseph Joachim (1831–1907). It was subsequently transferred to the Russian violinist Mischa Elman (1891–1967), who used it on tour for 41 years since 1907. The violin has thus been given the name “Joachim-Elman,” a name which gives anyone playing the instrument a great deal to live up to. In 1948, the “Joachim-Elman” Stradivari came into the possession of the collector and connoisseur Samuel Bloomfield, and then in 1981 it was acquired by the Czech violinist Josef Suk II (1929–present), who used it in recordings of Mozart’s violin concertos, which won him the France’s Grand Prix du Disque. With its unique style and rich history, this violin is one of the treasures of the Chi Mei Museum’s collection.