



House of Note

# News of Note



## Focus on Education

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Above: Krasimir Bakardjiev attended the 27th Annual Winter Bluegrass Weekend on March 3rd, 4th and 5th at the Radisson in Plymouth. We are working hard to be as accessible as possible to our string playing community.

## Teachers, Take Note!

To complement and enhance the string program at your school or studio, we have a representative available to give a presentation on "What Makes A Good Stringed Instrument." The presentation is light and informal and includes a question and answer period. Information will be presented in an age-appropriate format.

### Major Points of Discussion

- A brief history of instrument making
- The different parts and their functions
- Different types of finishes
- Instrument fittings and strings

We will bring a few instruments to be passed around for inspection that would include a violin "in the white," a cutaway violin to show the internal parts and a baroque-style instrument.

Students will gain a greater understanding of the creation process as well as information to help them select an instrument suitable for their stage of development.

For further information and to book a presentation contact Krasimir at 612-790-0617.

**House of Note has professional musicians on staff that are eager to help you select the perfect instrument.**



The friendly staff at House of Note brings experience to you with a combined total of over 100 years in the violin business.

## We'd like to help!

Teachers, from time to time you may come across a talented student who needs a good violin, viola or cello and has limited resources.

House of Note would like to help out and contribute to such a student's needs. If you have such a student, please contact us at 952-929-0026 for further details. Ask for Ed.

Also, on occasion, we can help out a beginning student with a good quality rental instrument.

# Featured Violins, Cellos

*If you are interested in auditioning any of our instruments or bows please phone toll free (877) 503-2181 or (952) 929-0026 for an appointment and one of our talented sales staff will be happy to assist you.*

*Cello:*  
**FOLLOWER OF CERUTI**  
**GERMANY**  
circa 1875



The cello has a rich complex colorful tone. This cello is warm and delightful to play. You won't want to put it down. The sound is smooth and silky with great depth of character. This cello has been played professionally in the Twin Cities for several years and was previously sold by Mathias Dahl. It has been brought up to twenty-first-century standards by our own Paul Dahlin. The cello is endowed with rich chocolatey varnish. The cello has a rich history with more waiting to be written.  
\$10,000.00

*Violin:*  
**CARCASSI SCHOOL**

circa 1830



This violin has a sweet and intimate sound with silvery A and E strings, dark and deep D and G strings. The violin has been beautifully restored by Luthier Ute Zahn. A great value for an early 19th-century instrument. The violin has a two-piece back, a one-piece top and has amber/brown varnish.  
\$4,000.00

**Getting to know our staff luthiers...**

## *20 years of married bliss, or something*

All through my first year at the Newark School of Violin Making, I could feel the pressure mount. Being a somewhat accomplished cellist, I was frequently asked, "So, when are you going to make a cello?" My course work wasn't particularly promising and the very thought of making anything as big — think of those yards of purfling, after all! — was, quite frankly, daunting, not to say overwhelming. The honest answer would have been "probably never." Instead, I would smile in a way which I hoped projected enthusiasm, and reply "probably in my second year."

By the end of summer term I acutely felt I had painted myself into a corner — there was really only one way to go. With a sinking feeling I took off to Southern Germany in the company of Jan and Eric, two Dutch schoolmates, to go timber shopping. All through my second year I secretly worked on my cello at home. Well, as secretly as you can if share a house with eleven other instrument makers who are constantly visited by all their instrument maker friends. At least my teachers didn't know so they couldn't point and laugh at me; at the preposterous idea that someone of my mediocrity would attempt anything so challenging.

I spent every evening and weekend toiling over those cumbersome pieces of wood. My housemates and their assorted friends were not shy about offering their opinions, advice, critiques, but also hands-on help, chocolate digestives and tool loans. Gradually the thing was beginning to take shape. Shortly before the summer break, quaking with nerves, I took the finished instrument

to my teacher. It weighed about a ton — out of over-cautiousness I had left the plates far too thick. The head, too, was enormous. However, the verdict was "not bad, good for you for trying."

I painted some muddy yellow, pre-produced varnish onto it and played it occasionally. After the summer holidays, I started on my second cello.

When I graduated from the Newark School I took up a position with a music shop in East Yorkshire. The cello moved to London with my former classmate, Jan, who was renting it from me in hopes of learning how to play. Some time later he called to say he had banged it against something and it now had a rib crack. I took it stoically — after all, I had been to violin making school. I could fix anything.

Before he left England Jan returned the cello to me; and when, in turn, I left to move to Hong Kong I parked it in my father's house in Germany, along with many other possessions. I was sure I'd be back in a year.

A couple of years later, two violin maker friends and I were planning an exhibition of our work at the Hong Kong Fringe Club. It occurred to me the cello might come in handy, and I sent for it. However, it needed some remodeling before being presented to the public eye. I stripped it of the yellow mud, took the front off to rethicken the plates, recarved the head to a more pleasing weight and shape, and finally revarnished it. When it was all put back together, I was surprised and pleased to find it sounded

# and Violas

Viola: 15 1/2"  
ANDRZEJ GLODEK  
NOWY TARG  
2002

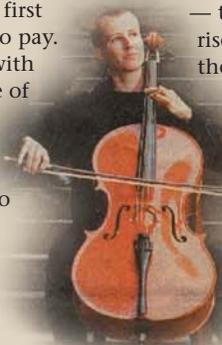


This master violinmaker works in the Nowy Targ, Poland workshop of Andrzej Swietlinski, making an exceptionally modeled viola with a focus on tone and playability. These ergonomic violas boast a string length equivalent to that of a viola one-half inch smaller. This viola has a silky smooth cello-esque sound with plenty of depth. An outstanding value for an aspiring player. \$6,000.00

delightful. My hope was that someone would buy it straight out of the exhibition — I was newly self-employed and my fledgling business needed some start-up capital. No one bought it, though. Instead, I found myself playing it more and more as I started to pick up gigs as a freelance musician.

When, a few months later, someone called who was interested in trying one of my cellos, I proudly told them they had a choice of two. The moment the words were out of my mouth, I knew there was something horribly wrong with them. There was no way I would part with my first cello, no matter how much they were willing to pay.

Sometimes love comes marching in with fireworks and trumpets. Other times, it is more of a process of insinuation. Awkwardly, I called the clients back to let them know that, well; actually, that one cello wasn't for sale, after all. For the next seven years, the cello and I did the Hong Kong music scene. We played opera and ballet, orchestral concerts, weddings, banquets, chamber music and Buddhist fundraisers. We played at the posh Mandarin Hotel for the cocktail crowd, on a junk, at the barracks for the farewell parties of the British military in preparation of the Hong Kong handover. We played for everyone who was someone and a lot of people who were no one in particular. Our experiences ranged from the sublime to the incredibly silly. The "End of Empire Coffee Morning" comes to mind; as well as an event in



a Chinese stadium with hundreds of soldiers of the People's Liberation Army running around us, bearing plastic torches and dressed in nothing but silver loincloths.

Every day I would ride the ferry into town from the small island I lived on, with the cello in the seat next to me, nestling in with my concert clothes, music stand, water bottle, book, umbrella and assorted snacks. I hoisted the cello over countless turnstiles, onto endless buses, trams and trains, I schlepped it on to fast boats and slow boats and jetfoils, I wrestled it into taxis without number. We traveled to China several times. We toured Taiwan. We were on TV together as well as in the orchestra pit. My back was constantly aching but those were our glory years.

During those years I had it on my bench a few times for small repairs. On particularly steamy summer days, the fingerboard would ooze great drops of a sweaty substance. Once I entered the room just in time to see a large cockroach disappearing through the f-hole, and on later (much later!) inspection found it had deposited a neat, pillow-shaped parcel of its eggs on the inside of the ribs. No matter what, though, the cello sounded luscious. It was a rewarding relationship.

When I was getting ready to leave Hong Kong for Minneapolis I was at a loss as to what to do with the cello. My plan was to take the train all the way from Hong Kong to Germany and it seemed too complicated to maneuver it through five border crossings. Neither was I comfortable having it locked into a container, to be shipped with my other belongings. In the end, a complicated route was devised which involved the cello flying, in the company of various family members, from Hong Kong to England, to Switzerland, where I was to pick it up en route to the US.

The night before the movers came we played one last gig. It was oppressively hot. We played softly, in a candle-lit room, with a tropical rainstorm hammering the windows, while a romantically-minded and very pimply young man proposed to his girlfriend.

During my first few weeks in Minnesota when I knew no one, the cello was my best friend. Initially I was apprehensive about practicing in my apartment. When no complaints came I grew bolder. I went to a chamber music workshop and found people to play with. A quartet was formed. It fell apart. I formed another and joined a pop band. We were back in business. All the same, things have changed for the cello and me. People still compliment me on its warm and velvety sound but I have noticed that it hasn't sounded quite itself since we left the tropics. Despite the use of up to four

Dampits in the winter, there is a slight scratchiness, the hint of a catch in its voice, a certain hesitancy in its response. It has been subject to all the problems associated with the Minnesota climate — the seasonal

rise and fall of the neck projection, eventually leading to the neck coming loose, and the resulting fluctuations in its sound and response.

For my part, all those years of playing six to eight hours a day without proper warm-ups and breaks have finally caught up with me. For the last eighteen months I have struggled with a shoulder injury, carpal tunnel syndrome and "trigger finger." Instead of embracing my cello with my usual passionate abandon, I now have to be cautious in my dealings with it, and limit our times together.

Still, I suppose that's what they mean when they say "for better or for worse." It's all part of growing old together. Having said that, while I am fast approaching middle age, the cello is just getting started. It is a comforting thought that when I'm long gone, it will still be out there somewhere, making beautiful music.

— Ute Zahn

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## Welcome to House of Note!

We are a full-service violin shop serving the string community since 1959. House of Note searches the world over to bring you the best-sounding instruments for the best value. Whether you're a beginner, professional or reacquainting yourself with the joys of playing, House of Note brings you the very best instruments, accessories, and personal service.

If you'd prefer to receive this newsletter via email, just drop us a note at [info@houseofnote.com](mailto:info@houseofnote.com).

### Hours:

**We are open: Monday – Wednesday, Friday  
9:30 – 5:30 p.m.**

**Thursday 9:30 – 8:00 p.m.**

**Saturday 9:30 – 12:00 noon (summer)**

**Saturday 9:30 – 3:00 p.m. (winter)**

**For your convenience,  
New evening hours on  
Thursday until 8:00 p.m.**

**Just a few of the many services we  
at House of Note have to offer:**

- INSTRUMENT AND BOW REPAIR**
- INSTRUMENT & BOW RESTORATION**
- APPRAISALS**
- TONAL ADJUSTMENTS**
- INSTRUMENT TRADE-INS**
- THE FINEST RENTAL INSTRUMENTS**

### **Advantages to Purchasing from House of Note:**

All instruments, regardless of price, are professionally reconditioned and set up with the same care. We maintain a large selection in all price ranges under \$15,000. Home trials are available, allowing the player and teacher time to assess an instrument or bow. Written appraisals are included with all fine instrument purchases. Repairs of previously owned instruments are guaranteed for one year.

### **House of Note**

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St. Louis Park, MN 55426

Toll-Free: (877) 503-2181

Local: (952) 929-0026

Fax: (952) 929-6778

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## **Don't Miss These Upcoming Events!**

### **Suzuki Conference**

We will again participate as a major sponsor at the 12th Conference of the Suzuki Associations of the Americas. This year's theme is "Always with Excellence" and is held at the Minneapolis Convention Center May 26, 27 and 28th.

The hours of operation are:

**Friday 3:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.**

**Saturday 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.**

**Sunday 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.**

*Please stop by for a visit!*

### **June SALE!**

Don't forget our annual sale during the entire month of June. All violins, violas, cellos and basses are discounted 10%.

### **The Chamber Music Society of Minnesota**

April 30, 2006

Minnesota History Center

345 Kellogg Blvd. W., St. Paul

*Featuring Charles Neidich, Guest Clarinetist*

We will have a limited number of complimentary tickets to this performance. Please call us at 952-929-0026 if you are interested.