

Violin making, a life's passion

It is nice to discover on visiting the new Museum of Musical Instruments of the Accademia di S. Cecilia in Rome that an important space is dedicated to an open violin making workshop.

Thus it is possible to observe violin makers at work, to see them maintain and preserve instruments inside a workshop and surrounded by their tools, many of which are still made by hand and a source of curiosity themselves.

The Museum management had wanted such a live space and it was realized with great insight by architect Renzo Piano; it was here that the tools and objects from the workshop of Dante Regazzoni have found a proper setting.

His memory pays homage to the work of all violin makers and that tradition that so closely unites location, tools, materials and instruments produced.

Dante Regazzoni lived in the post-war period when violin making in Italy was practiced by only a few and the possibilities of entering this arts-trade were remote.

The International School of Violin Making in Cremona, founded in 1938, counted a handful of students in that period - in contrast to the present day - and only the few lucky ones had the possibility of proper professional training under the guidance of a master.

The path chosen by Dante Regazzoni was one that was dictated by passion; his life's journey, which led him to wander through Brianza in search of advice and to travel to Cremona, Rome and Milan to meet those that would help him traverse the difficult road towards progress, is a story worth telling the many young students from all over the world who come to Cremona to become violin makers.

Making instruments entailed constant research for him, and his meetings with Pèter Tàtar, Ferdinando Garimberti, Gioacchino Pasqualini and the brothers Giacomo and Leandro Bisiach helped him to progress in this quest, as did the comparisons and exchanges with the other participants in competitions he entered.

Perseverance and the desire to improve are still fundamental qualities for those who embark in this profession. This monograph provides precious reading material for reconstructing an important period in the history of Italian violin making.

Virginia Villa

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