

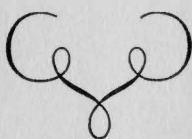
December 1958

REF

The Violin Makers' Journal

THE OFFICIAL MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF
THE VIOLIN MAKERS ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Devoted to the development and encouragement of the art of violin making
in Canada.



ADDRESS ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO THE EDITOR

DON WHITE, 4631 W. 14TH AVE., VANCOUVER 8, B. C.

SUBSCRIPTIONS TO NON-MEMBERS

\$3.00

~~2.00~~ PER YEAR.

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THE VIOLIN MAKERS' JOURNAL

Officers of the Association:

President: Geo. Friess - 2724 Yale Street

Vice President: Gilson Heyworth, 1683 Renfrew Street

Treasurer: Floyd Holly, 2636 West 6th Avenue

Secretary and Editor: Don White, 4631 West 14th Avenue

VOL 2..No.2.....December, 1958

EDITORIAL

THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

The "Journal" on wishing its readers The Compliments of the Season" had hoped to do so in some original manner, but how can one improve on the time-honored phrase "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year."

The real problem, for most of us, is endeavoring to carry out the "Spirit of Christmas" throughout the whole year.

When so-called Christian Nations are seriously considering the possibility of Atomic Warfare, when Unemployment, poverty and misery, stalk the land, when racial hatred and other prejudices assert themselves, it is a definite challenge even to retain ones sanity. Certainly we have strayed far away from the ideals of "The Prince of Peace".

We do, however, gain much encouragement from the fact that groups of people, such as our readers, (music lovers and lovers of their choosen hobby) can, through the medium of a magazine, present to others the "Fruits of their labors". This is the true spirit of brotherhood

The "Journal", wishes all its readers The Happiest and Merriest Christmas, and Prosperity throughout the coming year, and may we all retain the Spirit of Brotherhood throughout the year.

.....

IT FIGURES

Somebody said that it couldn't be done,
But he, with a chuckle, replied
That maybe it couldn't, but he would be one
Who wouldn't say so till he tried.
So he buckled right in, with a bit of a grin
On his face as he kidded and spoofed,
And he started to sing, as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done --

AND HE GOOFED

.....

NEW DATE FOR MEETINGS OF THE VIOLIN MAKERS' ASSOCIATION OF B.C.:

Will all members of our Association please note that in future all meetings will be held on the second saturday of each month. Excepting December meeting which will be held on Saturday December 20th at 8:00 p.m. sharp.

This change is due to the inability of your secretary to attend anymore thursday meetings, owing to circumstances over which he has no control.

We spoke, in our Editorial, on the Spirit of Christmas, surely this is exhibited in a group of kind people voluntarily making this change so that their secretary (Don White) may attend. Thank you members.

.....

OUR CHRISTMAS PARTY:

On saturday December 20th at 8:00 p.m. sharp our Christmas Party will be held at 4360 Main Street.

This promises to be a lively affair. There will be no business and violin making talk will be "taboo". We will concentrate on enjoying ourselves.

Our reorganized 12 piece Orchestra will render several numbers and will play Christmas Carols with the audience joining in. There will be guest artists who will entertain and in every respect we hope to have a big evening.

Visitors will be welcome, so bring your friends and your family - wife - or sweetheart. Refreshments will be served. No admission charge.

Let us make this a big affair and all have a good time. Be seeing you!

.....

THE ARIZONA ASSOCIATION OF VIOLIN MAKERS AND MUSICIANS:

We have just received the third number of a very attractive monthly magazine put out by this enthusiastic group.

The association, modeled after our own, is certainly going ahead fast. They have an inspiring program laid out. Mr. Robert Wallace Jr. is Editor of the magazine. We wish them good luck and "The Season's Greetings."

They are most fortunate in having in their midst one of the most distinguished lady violin lovers in America. Her name is Viola Ruth but she is affectionately known as "Mum".

Mum is also secretary for their association. She has done more to foster "old time" fiddling than any one person on this continent.

We hope in the near future to reprint an article on "Mum" Ruth which appeared in the Arizona Magazine.

.....

HAROLD BRIGGS LETTER:

I don't know how to tell you just how much I look forward to receiving my copy of the "Journal". I always read it over two or three times before putting it away with the previous coppies, and then I dig them all out and re-read the whole bunch once in awhile.

I am taking a special interest in the question of tuning the violin plates. When our good friend, the late "Doc" Porter spoke to our club, he seemed rather slighting of the idea, pointing out that after we got a plate tuned to our liking, it was glued to a stiff set of ribs which changed the tone entirely, but once when I called at his shop he showed me a violin he had made. It was all complete but not yet strung up and he thumped the top and back with the backs of his fingers to show the difference in tone, and said there should be a difference of two full semitones.

Now here is an angle I have never heard discussed, nor seen it mentioned in print. We are told that the old Strad violins, and I take it that this would include all the Italian violins made during the same period, had to have their necks lengthened and heavier Bass bars put in to stand the extra strain caused by tuning to a higher pitch. Now this would certainly raise the belly tone, and since they were good violins both before and after being altered, it might raise some doubts whether the tuning of the plates has so much relation to the tone after all.

I don't pretend to know enough about violins to advance any theories on these or other questions, but I would like to hear them discussed. Since it is generally conceded that these old Italian violins have never quite been equalled, I sometimes wonder if the old makers themselves might not have been a little closer in tune with the infinite than we of the present day.

Harold Briggs, White Rock, B.C.

.....

CHIPS FROM THE CHISEL:

I have used elastic bands for many years in connections with violin making and feel I should pass on to some who may not be aware of their usefulness.

For example, in gluing on the finger-board. I use a dozen number 64 quarter inch bands looped together. After the glue in on each finger-board and neck, I plug in no.4 peg, loop one end of the elastic over it, then begin wrapping as tightly as possible the full length of the neck, then return to the head and finish by looping the end over the peg.

It is still possible to straighten the finger-board if it needs it. This never leaves any marks of any kind. I also use the bands in many other ways and have found them most useful.

Geo. R. Wright

.....

LIFE, HOWEVER SHORT IS STILL MADE SHORTER BY WASTE OF TIME - Johnson

.....

WOLF NOTES by Chibiabos

Evidently no one wants to try a redwood top for their violin - or is it that nobody guessed who Chibiabos was, at any rate I received no answers to my query. The next clue will be a quotation from the Poem, all you have to do is name the poem and the poet, and the redwood is yours.

Most beloved by Hiawatha
 was the gentle Chiabiabos.
 He the best of all musicians
 He the sweetest of all singers.

When he sang, the village listened
 All the warriors gathered round him
 All the women came to hear him,
 Now he stirred their souls to passion
 Now he melted them to pity.

From the hollow reeds he fashioned
 Flutes so musical and mellow
 That the brook, the Sebowisha
 Ceased to murmur in the woodland
 And the wood birds ceased from singing.

Chibiabos was a musician, I cannot claim that distinction but I aim high, besides I like the name.

TWO SHUT-INS:

We would like to draw attention to two of our violin-making friends in Vancouver who, one from a handicap and the other from sickness are unable to attend our meetings.

Mr. William Arnold, 237 West 26th Avenue has suffered for many years from rheumatism. With the aid of two sticks Bill manages bench where he makes lovely violins. He always welcomes anyone who will call and visit to "talk fiddles" with him.

Ernie Lindberg, 196 West 12th Avenue, has been almost continually confined to bed for the last year with lung trouble. Ernie has written several articles in the Journal and knows his violins, also he writes some of the most interesting letters I have yet received. You out-of-town subscribers, why not make a pen pal of Ernie. You won't be sorry.

We wish these two friends a special Christmas Greeting and hope our local members will visit them during the festive season.

Mr. Burt Hatfield of Comox, B.C. is another good Pen Pal. Now in his 34th year, he enjoys letters about fiddles.

CELLO PLANS:

We gave a "plug" for Mr. Joseph Reid's cello plans in our last issue the price was not printed very plain. It was \$6.00 per set. Lovely plans.

THE LATE MR. JUSTIN GILBERT:

In reference to the tuning of plates I have received letters from at least four subscribers who mention the name of the late Justin Gilbert, of Victoria, B.C. Mr. Gilbert seems to have had a special method of tuning plate. Can anyone give me fuller details of his investigations. Did he write any articles and is his widow still living?

VIOLINISTS PROGRAM COURAGEOUS:

The following quote from The Vancouver Sun is of special interest:

Music by living composers comprised the greater part of a violin recital, Thursday evening in the Art Gallery.

Jeannette Lundquist, a violinist with much potential ability, presented a program that would be considered a courageous effort in any city.

It is an encouraging sign when you musicians play the works of contemporary composers and endeavor to interpret the modern idiom as they themselves feel it.

Many composers of today are inspired by prevailing conditions and young people are probably better fitted to project these inspirations than players of older generations.

By her choice of music in various styles and moods, Miss Lundquist revealed a discerning mind in addition to musical understanding.

The violinist showed good technical grounding and her playing was always fresh, spontaneous and unaffected.

CHRISTMAS PARTY

Will all members who can play at all please bring an instrument so that they can join in with our orchestra during the Christmas carols. Remember the date Saturday December 20th.

VARNISHING:

It looks as if we were to have a serious discussion on Violin varnish. Mr. McNeese starts it this month and we have others ready to do battle with both Mr. McNeese and Mrs. Sangster.

Will anyone having good results with tuning plates please write in their experiences.

.....

IT IS NOT THE SIZE OF THE DOG IN THE FIGHT BUT THE SIZE OF THE FIGHT IN THE DOG.....

.....

There is always free cheese -

IN A MOUSE TRAP

.....

.....

OUR NEW ADVERTISERS:

We hope that our readers will support our advertisers. The confidence they have shown in the "Journal" is worthy of being repaid by purchasing from them wherever possible. We hope to give a short write up on some of them every month. Shall we start with our last and work back?

W.L. Laubi of Dubendorf, Switzerland is conceded to be one of the leading violin wood manufacturers in Europe. Many makers still believe European wood is superior to American. To these makers we can only say that Mr. Laubi gives a square deal,, his wood can be depended on to be as described both as to age and quality and his prices are right. Remember "raw wood" comes in duty free.

It hardly seems necessary to mention Bob Wallace but if it is first class tonal wood you wish for tops you cannot do better than use his high altitude wood. I like the wide grain best.

Mr. S. Kawjawa is a varnish expert. I mentioned in these pages before that I have never used a varnish that spreads easier, just like painting a house. A rich gloss and perfect for tone.

DRAGON SKIN:

A new kind of sand paper, which is not paper at all but metal has appeared on the market and is might handy for coarse work. It is called Dragon Skin and is put out by, Red Devil Tools Co., Union, N.Y., U.S.A.

Dragon skin is sold complete with hand-grip and is on the same principal as a nutmeg-grater. Refills can be bought for the hand grip. Cost complete \$1.00 from any hardware.

SURFORM PLANE

Another new tool is called a Surform Plane, manufactured by the well known Stanley tool people.

This is a combination - half plane and half sander - call it what you like, its still a very handy tool, cost about \$2.00 - extra blades for a dollar each. Try one.

.....

The Executive Officers of The Violin Makers' Association of B.C. desire to extend to all subscribers and their families The Seasons Greetings. May your Christmas be a very happy one.

.....

DON'T FORGET THE CHRISTMAS PARTY SATURDAY

DECEMBER 20, 1958

.....

BARGAINS IN CULTURE ON GROCER'S SHELVES by Dave Brock

Local readers will know Mr. Dave Brock as "The Voice" on Film Souvenirs shown each evening on CBUT network at 6:30 p.m. (editor)

This week's best bargain in groceries is an LP disc of Tschaikowsky's First Piano Concerto.

The big specials each week used to be ham and oranges and stuff like that. We and our grocers were little better than pigs.

Today it's a poor grocer's serialism for a while, and tank up on the finer things.

The reason my local supermarket sells LP records, as I understand it, is to round out its complete line of such groceries as hair-oil, nylon hosiery, bootlaces, towels, toys, detective yarns, Bible history as told in "comic" picture books, men's underwear, Dutch bulbs, hardware and stationery.

Not to mention dictionaries, sold in sections as a serial among the cereals. These sections you put together at home in the do-it-yourself room.

Besides Tschaikowsky's fiddle concerto you can get Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, and these are Brand Names which inspire shopping with confidence.

Why, you can even buy a long-playing record of Miss Yvonne de Carlo at my supermarket. And before you start to sneer, just remember: If a long record is an advantage, then one which seems even longer must seem even better.

I bet this record of hers seems endless. Do you call that nothing?

And before you start to sneer at my supergrocer for stocking music, just remember that music is the food of love. And it's love that makes the world go round.

Love and music and tenors and spaghetti...they all go together and here's bad luck to anyone who breaks the chain and puts them asunder.

I s
me this fascinating disc, full of love's carbohydrates, fats and proteins. Plus ash, fibre and trace elements. All tastefully packaged in four colors."

And, encouraged by my sensible willingness by to compromise with progress, he did.

Now it may be that a few local record shops are feeling the draft, just as the nurserymen felt it when the grocers began selling non-edible tulips and unsaladable shrubs.

Another drawback is that the more staples and notions and potions and lotions you cram into a foodstore, the less food you can store. But you can't put the clock back (as a grocer remarked when a customer broke this week's special eight-day mantel model).

There's one way you could put the clock back, though. When I was a kid, a few of the sillier stores tried to sell gramophone records made of toffee. When you got sick of a tune you ate it, dust and germs and all. cont....

BARGAINS IN CULTURE ON GROCER'S SHELVES cont....

Now that food and music are better integrated than that, we might be able to rise on stepping-stones of these dead toffee-discs to finer things. How about Elgar's "Enigma Variations" on an LP wheel of Swedish Helth-Bisc?

That is, if the long-haired grocery set ever deign to think about food any more.

.....

A FEW COMMENTS ON THE VIOLIN by Ernest Lindberg

In your introduction to Dr. F.A. Saunders letter re: The Importance of Tuning the plates of the Violins. I am quoting your last line in your introduction. "We hope that readers will write in giving their opinion or experience on this vital subject." I have not only read Dr. account of the experiments made with the aid of the electronic instruments, in regard to the various tones produced by the plates - I have studied every word without having to look in the "Journal". As I have not seen the instruments or the methods used in the experiments. I am not able to carry on any discussion of the matter, except saying that Dr. F.A. Saunders experiments are of vital importance, that will help us along in making violins that will equal the best made at Cremona. Dr. Saunders refers to experiments made by Professor Savart (during the last century - now, I begin to feel more at home) Many years ago I became very interested in Mr. Savart's experiments. I am quoting a few lines from Dr. Saunders letter, referring to Mr. Savart: showed that the back should give a slightly higher pitch, than the top, this has been called Savart's rule." Mr. Savart's experiments led him to believe that the basic model tone for the top should be C and the back D. The international pitch was raised to 440 giving us the note A, since Savart, so we must consider that too. In January 1938 I acquired the blue prints of a famous Strad, and the wood for 2 violins from Europe and also a burning ambition to make the violins equal in appearance and tone to the original - quite a job!

The first problem I met with was - why does the shifting of the sound post change the tone in the violin? The reason for that is; that a shift of the sound post, shifts the center from which the bridge sets the violin vibrating. If we take a piece of a 2x4 about 2 ft. long and drill a hole in the side of it and with a few light taps with a hammer fasten a clamp that is suitable in such a manner that the pinion is vertical. Next screw the pinion down until it rests on the 2x4. Make a mark where the pinion touches the 2x4 and remove the clamp, and take a 1/2 inch drill and drill a hole about 1/2 inch deep. Next make a pin about 2 inches long and fit it into the hole, that will leave us with a pin about 1 1/2 inches long. Next replace the clamp, and a few slight adjustments to bring the pinion in alignment with the pin. We are now ready for the tests.

Paying due regard, in not leaving any marks on the plates from the pinion, or the pin we find that with the aid of an automatic caliper that gives us thicknesses in fractions of the 64ths. That if we have followed the blue prints correctly, when we get the plates down to the thickness, that the blue prints call for, that if we mark a spot on the center line where the bridge comes and do the same on the back. We find that if we clamp the plates on the pin in the 2x4 on that spot that we marked, that the plates give a clear note that is very close to C in the top and D in the back, if we draw a bow in line with the marks in the F holes on the edge of the plates. If the plates are

A FEW COMMENTS ON THE VIOLIN cont..

well graduated we get the same note from both sides of the plates.

Only a fraction of a 64th is required to lower the note in the plates a semitone or so. Well, after all the labor I spent on the violins, they were finished and ready for playing in July 1938. Some of my friends talked me into taking part in the exhibition, and I got both 1st and 2nd prize. It seems to me, that similar causes, under similar circumstances, will always produce similar effects. I am therefore firmly convinced that every factor re: size, shape and wood, and varnish, also tuning the plates, are all important factors in solving the problem of duplicating such wonderful violi the Emperor and the Empress, and the Dolphin, that we have heard played by their owners in the concert halls.

Ernie Lindburg, Vancouver.

.....

NOTES ON DR. SAUNDERS SUMMARY ON TAP TONES by Don White

Dr. Saunders article is causing much favorable comment and since, owing to the small space allowed, he was not able to cover all the experiment I thought it well to enlarge on Dr. Saunders article, or, if you wish comment on the Strad articles.

According to Dr. Saunder's articles which appeared in the "Strad" magazine of August and September of this year, Savart's rule would produce a violin much to be admired by Chamber Music Players. For orchestra and soloists Savart's rule would have to be, as it were, reversed. That is the back would have a lower tone than the top. I quote from Page 158 of the September Strad. "When the principal peak of the back fell midway between the two principal peaks of the top, about a semitone apart; orchestra players and soloists preferred these instruments - see photo strip of violin no 29" (end of quote).

Photo strip of violin No.29 shows the back had one principal peak at 300 C.P.S. which is a little lower than E. (E has 320 C.P.S.) The top of violin No.29 shows two strong peaks, one at 250 C.P.S. and another at 340, which is about F. (F is 341.3 C.P.S.)

It appears that the back generally gives one note but the top gives 2 (if you listen carefully). The problem is to get the back in between the two notes of the top. Then you get a solo instrument.

A strange thing occurs to a viola, Page 126 - August Strad. At one stage the top showed the highest peak at 250 C.P.S. The instrument was poor so the top was thinned down, 18 grams of wood being removed. The top then showed its high peak at 275 C.P.S. - a rise of 25 C.P.S. by thinning. We have always believed that thinning plates brings the tone down. Strange things happen to the top and this was one..

I have just completed a violin built on the above lines. Top about 1 tone higher than back and the instrument shows promise of being remarkably good. I will have more to say about this fiddle should it continue to improve, or at least retain its present tone. I used no electrical equipment, just tuned to a piano and found it not easy to pick out two separate top tones in the top.

.....

"MR. PORTER'S CURVE" OF THE VIOLIN TOP:

The late Mr. Porter, in showing me some of his violins, casually remarked that he increased the height of the longitudinal curvature of the top in the region of the upper bouts of his violins. I learned from our friend Mr. Briggs when talking to him at the Association's exhibit in the F.N.E. this year that this was known as "The Porter's Curve" for the top. Mr. Briggs kindly gave me the following description on how to arrive at the curve. "At a distance of $3\frac{1}{4}$ " from the top, the height should be $\frac{5}{8}$ " and, at a distance from the bottom of $3\frac{1}{2}$ ", the height should be $\frac{1}{2}$ " and the curve should be drawn through these points." The dimensions are interesting for the following reason. $3\frac{1}{2}$ " is the wave length of one of the octaves of the note C. If you divide $\frac{5}{8}$ " x $\frac{1}{2}$ " you get the fraction of $\frac{10}{8}$ which is $\frac{5}{4}$, the same as the interval for the major third. Mr. Briggs' explanation was a good rule of thumb and I believe that the method I propose of drawing this curve bears out his statement.

I would suggest the following method drawing the curve. First, take a piece of white paper 18" x 48" approximately, laid out on a drawing board with the length vertical. Near the top draw a line to represent the length of the top of the violin, or more accurately, the same length of line as the interior length of the violin (being 35 centimeters long), as mentioned in my article of September, 1958, in the "Journal". This line should also be divided into 72 parts and the following points established - at 0 put the letter A; at 72 put the letter B at 36 put the letter C, and at 32 put the letter D.

From the point C draw a perpendicular line to AB and equal in length to the line AB and at the end put the letter E. Through E draw a line parallel to AB to the left side of the line CE. At a distance on this parallel line of $14\frac{2}{5}$ division place an upright pin and letter this point F.

From the point D draw a perpendicular line equal in length to 3 times the length of the line AB, and at the end place a pin and letter the point G.

Now take a piece of thread with the loop in the end in which a pencil point is inserted and, with the radius three times the line AB attach the thread to the pin at the point G. Start to draw the curve by commencing at the point 32 and go in both directions to the full length of the line AB. In the course of drawing the curve the thread will foul against the pin at F on the line drawn parallel to the line AB. Draw perpendicular lines from the points A and B to cut off the ends of the curve. A line can be drawn between the two ends of the curve and extended at each end to equal the length of the top of the violin.

The height of the curve can be tested at the distances of $3\frac{1}{2}$ ". From the ends of the extended line I found that the measurements given to me by Mr. Briggs were confirmed. Finally, the ends of the curve can be flattened or turned up slightly to meet the style of edge one prefers.

I would draw your attention to the relationships of other dimensions used in constructing the curves and the intervals involved. The relationship of CE to DG is 1 to 2 the octave. The point D, at 32 dividing AB, in the proportion of 32 to 40, is 5 to 4 - i.e. the major third interval. EF to AC is an interval of one octave and a fifth.

Clarence Cooper, Victoria

TONE WOOD

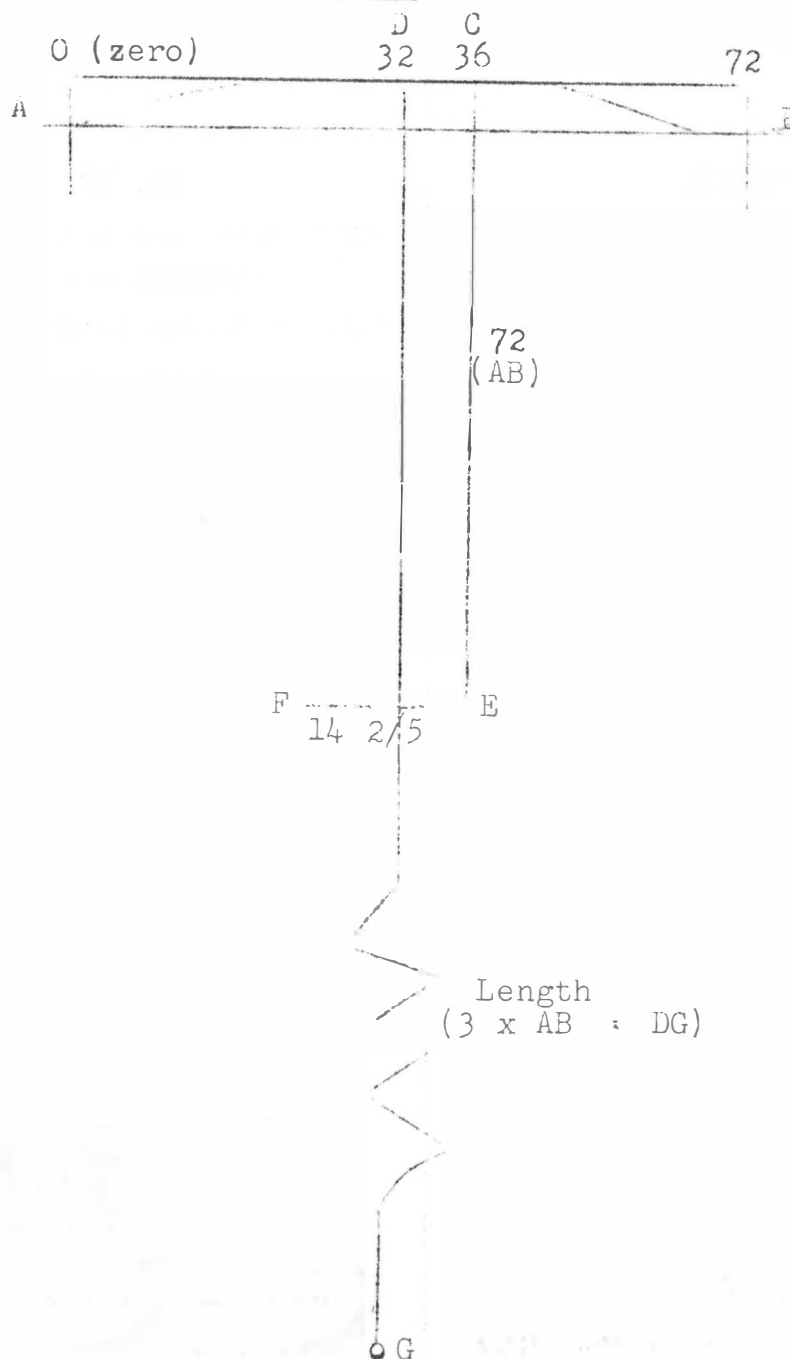
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MR. MC NEESE ON VARNISH AND PLATE TUNING:

Thanks for the copies of the Journal, very interesting, also enjoyed the humor. Thought I was the only "fiddle bug" in captivity with a sense of humor, should have known better. It is essential to modern life.

The notes on plate tuning were interesting but what good is plate tuning if the wood is not treated to prevent them from going out of tune? The scientists say there are several hundred varieties of bugs, bacteria, moulds and fungi, whose dishes are cellulose, lignin and wood sugar. Say nothing of oxidization and loosening of fibres by playing vibration. Authorities say that acetic acid was used as a wood preservative, and it is possible to treat wood with a mixture of acetic anhydride and vinydine (editor's note: We think Mr. McNeese means vinylidene chloride) Four parts of A.A. and one part of Vynidine with strong heat (too much I'd say). Whereby the hydroxyl groups of the end molecules of the cellulose chains are replaced by CH groups.

This wood is a little darker and stronger than natural wood, but it is not for the bugs, even a toredo will not touch it. I treated three fiddles this way. I thought the tone was the best I had ever got, but they reeked very badly. After five years the odor still lingers.

Your readers do not seem to agree on the proper method of tuning plates. Mr. Ellersieck said the old Italians were probably simple straight forward workers so why not try a simple method of plate tuning. I feel I get good results by finishing the violin completely, as Mr. Justin Gilbert recommends, let it mature a few months, then remove the belly and neck, then tune the back, with ribs on, in unison with the top and put everything together again. Use the tap tone as recommended by Mr. Gilbert. (Mr. McNeese does not give the tap tone. Editor)

Of course all this is futile if a filler is not used that preserves the wood against all the things that cause it to deteriorate. The filler used by the Italians was yellow in color but it is doubtful if it was the yellow of gamboge or oxidized raw linseed oil. They have been tried too often with no results to write home about. The filler, I believe, should not fill the wood so the pores are closed but should look more like yellow dye and the varnish should be soft and elastic.

I tried Mr. Sangsters method of linseed oil and resin as a first coat then oxidizing. This was a long time before I read his articles. I obtained no startling results.

I have spent a lot of time experimenting with fillers and varnish and got my first clue from an old gipsy violin I was repairing. After a lot of work I finally came up with a filler and varnish that, to my mind, produces the best tone I have yet obtained. Its quality depends on the method of preparation and two ingredients not used, as far as I know, in the making of violin varnish nowadays. These ingredients were freely available to the old masters, and not at all rare or expensive. The ingredients I use in the filler I also use in the varnish. This filler is a preservative and a plastisizer and a coloring agent. It will also take the coloring agents of the old masters, Logwood madder etc.

cont...

MR. MC NEESE ON VARNISH AND PLATE TUNING cont..

The varnish is clear and transparent and the wood grain and curl show right through it like nobody's business.

There is the world of evidence to show that it is the old Italian varnish but I'd have to write a book to explain all this to you.

I would very much like you to try my filler and varnish and would send you a sample for free if you would like to do so. Christmas Greetings to all you Violin Makers.

Lee McNeese, 170 South Tisdale
Buffalo, Wyoming, U.S.A.

.....

MORE CHIPS FROM THE CHISEL

If you want to oxidize turpentine and raw linseed oil, get 2 pieces of sheet lead 8 x 12 inches in size and at least 1/16th inch thick so it will be rigid. Turn up the edges one inch. This will make two trays one inch deep. Make a spout in one corner.

If you fill one with raw linseed oil to a depth of about 3/8ths inch and the other with turps to a depth of only 1/2 inch. You will then have enough for a batch of varnish.

Expose to direct sunlight outside, if possible. It will oxidize even on cloudy days. Stir once in a while.

Re-making varnish with iron coloring. Read Mr. Christian Skou's article in the "Strad" september and december 1957. (we hope to review these in our January issue. Editor)

I tried steel wool but there was too much rust in the varnish, so I bought some cigar-box nails and had good results. Would recommend iron sparingly, as my varnish got too dark.

I found the varnish harder to apply than ordinary violin varnish, but it does make an excellent finish.

Oxidized linseed oil leaves a greyish cloudy effect. If you want it to penetrate into the wood use it when the oil is only partly oxidized.

Peder Svindsay, Vancouver, B.C.

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Post Office has received its first shipment of blank income tax return forms. Merry Christmas....

.....

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