

ANTOINE LAULHÈRE

Reinventing sounds



From 1989 to 1995, he devoted a significant amount of his time to researching ancient varnishes.

During this period, he established a link between the mineral processes used on the 18th century instruments and the specific resonance of instruments from this period. He worked tirelessly collecting formulae for wood preparation from artisans in France and Italy. This would lead, in 1995, to the development of an original and exclusive varnish: varnish 'en affresco' varnish, as well as a collaboration with the Mulhouse Research Institute (ENSCMU).

Since then, he and his wife Giovanna Chitto' have been using this varnish for their own instrument-making.

In 2007, he was invited by the Cité de la Musique in Paris to present his research at an international symposium entitled 'De la peinture de chevalet à l'instrument de musique : vernis liants et couleur' (From the drawing board to the musical instrument: binding and coloured varnishes').

Since 1995, he has focused mainly on making modern and baroque instruments and on adjustments to sound production. He is highly valued for his ability to listen to his clients and understand their requirements with respect to their tastes and distinctive identities; experience built by 20 years spent working with a wide range of musicians.

His knowledge of ancient varnishing techniques, and his instrument-making ability in consider-

ing their sonority first and foremost led him to create many classical and baroque instruments, as well as custom-made ones, and instruments for jazz, etc.

Between 2007 and 2011, the Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles (CMBV) commissioned him and his wife to 're-invent' 18 instruments in order to recreate the orchestra of the 24 violons du Roy ('Violins of the Sun-King').

This exciting project was realized with the enthusiastic support of violinist Patrick Cohen Akenine, the involvement of musicologist Jean Duron, a specialist in French Baroque music, and the musicians of the Folies Françaises orchestra (a French orchestra specialized in the rediscovery of the French Baroque repertoire).

The first international re-enactment had a significant media impact that greatly publicized the rediscovery of three forgotten instruments, the quinte, the taille, and the haute-contre violins.

With a resonance typical of that of the French Baroque, their voice had not been heard for 250 years.

A feature film and documentary by Arte télévision chronicles the workshop's fascinating story during these years.

