

## **RNCM Strings Festival - Live Viola-Making**

(Impressions from a student's point of view)

As a current BMus viola student at the RNCM, I was privileged to be able to observe the Live Viola-Making and Luthiers' Exhibition at the RNCM over the course of a number of cold January days.

During the days leading up to the event and throughout the weekend's festivities, four instrument makers from Germany, France and the U.K. - William Castle, Helen Michetschläger, Kai-Thomas Roth and Marc Soubeyran - came together to make a viola based on a model by Italian luthier Anselmo Bellosio. As I was performing twice in the Strings Festival, I was busy rehearsing for the upcoming concerts, but was privileged to spend some time each day observing the progress of the viola-making. Throughout the week, I got to know the four makers, asking them as many questions as possible. Perhaps most importantly, I was interested to know whether collaborating on the making of an instrument was more difficult than working alone. Marc Soubeyran assured me that it wasn't! These four luthiers have made many instruments together in the past and get great motivation from working as team. Marc also spoke about ensuring a wonderful standard of craftsmanship: despite four individuals working on different parts of the viola at the same time, they worked in such a way that ultimately the pieces would fit together to make a flawless instrument.

I was lucky enough to be able to try the viola myself before it was played in the Saturday concert by Alexander Mitchell, a good friend of mine. It was an interesting experience as the viola was much smaller than my own instrument, but both Alex and I agreed that it was a quality instrument with great tonal colours and easy to play. After the concert the viola was placed in the RNCM's collection and it will be available for loan to student at the RNCM in need of a special instrument.

***Jonas Lindner***  
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