

50<sup>TH</sup>

INTERNATIONAL  
VIOLA  
CONGRESS



**Exhibitor  
Biographies**

# Exhibitor Biographies



## **SAMUEL BARREAU**

After studying violin at the Toulouse Conservatory, he left the south of France for Mirecourt to learn the basics of violin making at the Jean-Jacques Pages school.

He then worked as a luthier for several years, but it was thanks to training with Emmanuel Bégin in 2013 in Montreal, Canada, that he decided to specialize in bow making.

In 2015, he opened his bow-making workshop in Toulouse, in premises he shares with a fellow luthier (Benoît Germain) and a music bookshop (Le Croquenotes).

Website : <https://archetier-toulouse.fr/>

Facebook : <https://www.facebook.com/samuelbarreauarchetier/>

Instagram : <https://www.instagram.com/barreauarch/children>



### ROLAND BELLEGUIC

Roland Belleguic was born in Quimper, Finistère, in 1990. Since his childhood, he has been animated by manual work, drawing and metamorphosis. The transformation of a mental image into matter. Motivated by woodwork, he turned to carpentry at the age of sixteen. At the same age, he discovered a real interest in jazz guitar. Naturally, these two passions led to his desire to become a luthier.

He discovered the world of stringed instruments by entering the National School of Violin Making in Mirecourt (France). After graduating with honours, he became a student and assistant to the violin maker Patrick Robin. After seven years spent with him, he decided to devote himself fully to making violins, violas and cellos and settled in a village on the banks of the Loire. At the same time, he studied the viola with François Hetsch.

His work is constantly evolving, nourished by the study of 16th and 17th century instruments, exchanges with musicians, violin makers and the invaluable research of the violin maker François Denis.

#### Awards:

Gold medal for a viola at the first international violin and bow making in Mirecourt in 2023.

Gold medal for a violin at the Internationaler Geigenbauwettbewerb in Mittenwald in 2022.

Gold medal for a viola at the Internationaler Geigenbauwettbewerb in Mittenwald in 2022.

Silver medal for a viola at the Internationaler Geigenbauwettbewerb in Mittenwald in 2022.

ambassador.



### MARION BENNARDO

In the artist town of Kirkcudbright, nestled in the mull of Galloway, Scotland, lies my cosy workshop. I carefully select the highest quality, ethically sourced raw materials that have been harvested and used in the same tradition for centuries by the early masters. I have made very little 'improvements' to a tradition of making that has achieved perfection generations ago.

It's in the spirit of these old Italian, Scottish and English masters and their understanding of aesthetics and acoustics that I bring my instruments into the world.

I am a well-respected and much-loved maker of violins, violas and cellos with nearly 20 years of experience graduated from the prestigious Newark School of Violin Making and Restoration. I am deeply passionate about music and the service I can bring to all musicians from all walks of life. For more info please visit [www.mondocellos.com](http://www.mondocellos.com)



## **BENJAMIN BEUGNIES**

Trained at the Nice Conservatory of Classical Music, Benjamin Beugnies turned his attention to instrument making at an early age, a profession that combines precision craftsmanship with musical sensitivity. After graduating from the National School of Instrument Making, he completed his training with a technician's certificate before spending five years in Ireland perfecting his skills with a master luthier.

Based in the Bouches-du-Rhône region for the past thirty years, he designs and crafts his own instruments, renowned for their rich sound, balance, and unique character. Each creation reflects a constant pursuit of excellence, fueled by a deep knowledge of materials, meticulous woodworking, and attentive listening to musicians.

Today, his work reflects a rare expertise, shaped by three decades of craftsmanship, experimentation, and passion for instrument making.



## **APPOLINE CATALAN**

Appoline Catalan began to study violin as a child and since then has never ceased to enjoy playing music with friends. She studied violin making at Ecole Nationale de Lutherie de Mirecourt and graduated in 2010. She pursued her apprenticeship at Olivier Perot's workshop in Montreal, where she practiced instrument restoration for several years. Eager to broaden her horizons and discover various visions of craft, she completed her training by traveling and working with different violin makers around the world.

She opened her own workshop in 2016, focusing on making violins, violas and cellos.

She now works in Uzerche with her colleague bow maker Lucie Martinie.

Being very attached to sharing and gathering ideas with others, she is involved in many collaborative and collective projects within her corporation.



### ANTOINE CAUCHE

Antoine Cauche trained at the International School of Violin Making in Newark (UK). After graduating in 2001, he continued his apprenticeship with violin makers Patrick Robin and Andrea Frandsen in Angers, working alongside them for eight years.

He opened his workshop in 2008 and devoted himself to making string quartet instruments, gaining experience through contact with musicians and fellow luthiers and bow makers.

He has won several gold medals and first prizes at prestigious international competitions (London 2004, Portland 2008, Cremona 2009, Paris 2010, 2014, 2022).

His instruments are appreciated and played by professional musicians, students, teachers, and concert performers (Orchestre National de France, Orchestre National des Pays de la Loire, Opéra de Paris, Opéra de Marseille, CNSMD de Paris, Royal Academy of London, Julliard School of New York, etc.).

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### THÉO CHARRY

After obtaining my Diploma in Musical Instrument Making in 2016, I went to Brussels to train in bow making at Pierre Guillaume's workshop at Maison Bernard.

I began my training by maintaining and rehairing the workshop's customers' bows. Once I had mastered the basics, I was entrusted with more delicate operations on the bows made in the workshop.

After six years of training and practice in this prestigious workshop, my wife, who is also a luthier, and I decided to return to France to open our own workshop, where we offer maintenance, repair, rental, and manufacturing services for instruments and bows.

Although trained in modern bow making, I am passionate about the style and mechanics of antique bows. I am therefore delighted to be able to offer a wide range of bow styles today.

## **CLAC – COLLECTIF DE LUTHERIE ET D'ARCHETERIE CONTEMPORAINES**

The Collectif de Lutherie et d'Archeterie Contemporaines (Contemporary Stringed Instrument and Bow Making Collective) aims to contribute to the dynamism and promotion of modern instrument making.

During the Viola Congress, Marie Chastagnol, Clémence de Lartigue, and Jean-Pascal Nehr will offer a public bow-making workshop. They will demonstrate the essential stages of this demanding precision work: choosing materials, shaping, finding the right balance, and fine adjustments, all of which are crucial to the instrument's playability and sound.

This creative session offers a unique insight into the bow and the craftsmanship that goes into making it.

[www.clacparis.com](http://www.clacparis.com)



## **LUIS CLAUDIO MANFIO**

I started making instruments when I was a boy. When I was young Michael Tree (Guarneri Quartet violist) advised me to make only violas, so I am exclusively dedicated to viola making. I live in the viola world! About 20 principals and some soloists on 6 continents play my violas. Prominent orchestras like Gewandhaus Leipzig, Royal Philharmonic (London), Kammerphilharmonie Bremen and Korean Chamber Orchestra have – or had – a MANFIO viola.

A MANFIO viola will offer you a generous dynamic range; a powerful C string; a focused, dark and warm sound; a quick response; clarity and balance in all strings and positions.

I see my violas as tools for making music, they easy to play: light in weight, with thin and comfortable necks.

My website is [www.manfioviolas.com](http://www.manfioviolas.com)



### MARCO COPPIARDI

Marco Coppiardi graduated from the Stradivari IPALL violin-making school in Cremona in 1985. "In Cremona, I learned how to make new instruments; in Boston, I fell in love with vintage ones."

Violin maker and restorer Marco Coppiardi has worked with musicians such as Roman Totenberg, Nicolas Kitchen, Lily Francis, and Yo-Yo Ma. Collectors and musicians own his instruments. After working for 26 years in Boston, Massachusetts, Marco has returned to his hometown, Cremona, Italy, where he specializes in making detailed copies of vintage instruments.



### SAVINE DELAPORTE JOUAN

Born into a family of musicians, Savine was quickly fascinated by music, particularly the masterful works of the violin, viola, and cello repertoire. She studied viola and chamber music at the conservatories of Dijon and Lyon, then turned to instrument making, curious to understand how instruments work and how sound is produced. She undertook a ten-year apprenticeship, first at the Cremona School, then in various workshops across Europe, working on both ancient and modern instruments.

In 2006, she set up her workshop in Saint Nazaire, Brittany, where she makes the quartet's instruments. She also has a workshop in Paris, which serves as a meeting place for musicians.

For Savine, building an instrument means creating a voice from textures and colors of sound. It means creating a place where music takes shape, where emotion is released, where spirit marries matter, where the invisible becomes audible.

## **BAPTISTE DIONNET**

Baptiste Dionnet chooses to shape sound through wood. Graduating in 2016 from the National School of Violinmaking in Mirecourt, he then deepened his knowledge of quartet instrument making by working with Antoine Cauche in Angers and Joël Klépal in Paris.

In 2021, he settled in Chinon to focus on his own projects. There, he creates violin, violas and cellos, both modern and baroque. With carefully selected woods, refined techniques and a keen sensitivity to his craft, he draws on centuries of tradition to develop his personal style.

Instagram : [@baptistedionnetluthier](https://www.instagram.com/baptistedionnetluthier)

Facebook : <https://www.facebook.com/baptistedionnetluthier>

No website.



## **DANIEL FORMIGONI**

Since my childhood, I have always been fascinated by the magic of craftsmanship and the world of music. Over the years, I have had the privilege of learning my trade in various workshops, where master artisans passed down traditional techniques while encouraging me to explore new ideas and trends.

This experience allowed me to perfect my craft and understand the importance of balancing tradition with innovation. Today, I am proud to offer high-quality handmade bows, carefully and passionately crafted.

Each piece is unique, reflecting both my love for my work and my commitment to meeting the needs and desires of my clients, both aesthetically and functionally.



### LUCIE GIRARD

Fascinated by the rich sound and aesthetic appeal of the viola, Lucie has specialized in its manufacture for several years. After graduating from the Newark International School of Violin Making in 2012, she joined Alexandre Snitkovski's workshop in Lyon, where she trained in high-end restoration for six years.

Inspired by her study and observation of the most prestigious instruments that passed through the Lyon workshop, Lucie created her own workshop in order to devote herself entirely to the manufacture of string quartet instruments.

Awards and distinctions:

- "Coup de Coeur" prize at the VIOLA'S 2022 competition (Paris)



### OLIVER GOLLIN

My deep affinity for music, nature, and craftsmanship led me to pursue a career in stringed instrument making. After completing my training in Germany, I worked for several years in Leipzig before moving to France, where I worked in various prestigious workshops in Toulouse, Paris, and Lyon.

In 2020, I moved to Vienna, Austria, to work closely with musicians from the national orchestra and chamber orchestra, and to obtain my master craftsman's certificate. Two years later, my path led me to Cremona, Italy, the cradle of violin making.

For several years, I was able to deepen my knowledge in the shadow of Stradivari, Guarneri, and Amati, alongside highly esteemed colleagues.

I finally settled in Marseille in 2025, and I welcome you to my workshop.



## LOUIS GORD

Louis studied viola at Angers's Musical Conservatory for twelve years and has played in orchestras and chamber music ensembles. His love for music and crafts pushed him to the service of performers and their instruments.

In 2012, he graduated from the International Violin Making School of Mirecourt in France. During his studies, he notably worked with Jérôme Doucet in Angers and Vatelot-Rampal in Paris on restoration and maintenance of antique and rare instruments.

However, he quickly grew fond of making modern instruments. After school, Louis worked with violin makers Marcus Klimke, Antoine Cauche, Patrick Robin and his assistant, Viateur Roy.

In January 2014, he became Isabelle Wilbaux's assistant in Montreal, Quebec. For their mutual work on a viola, Isabelle and Louis won a fabrication credit certificate and a sonority credit certificate, during the 2014 Violin Society of America competition in Indianapolis. During the 2018 VSA Competition, he was awarded a Certificate of Merit for Workmanship for his viola.

In June 2019, Isabelle and Louis separated their activities. Since then, Louis works on his own creations.

In October 2020, he entered the board of directors of the Canadian violin and bow maker's association: the Maker's Forum, and took on the role of Treasurer.

He is a founder member of the Collectif Lutherie Montreal, a shared workshop and violin making center of documentation, based in Montreal, Quebec. During the 2022 VSA Competition, he was awarded a Silver Medal for Artisanship for his viola.

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Facebook : @louisgordluthier  
Instagram : @louisgord



### MARCUS KLIMKE

Born in 1968 in Weimar, Marcus Klimke left East Germany with his family for Crailsheim, West-Germany in 1984. He did an apprenticeship as a cabinet maker before he entered the violin making school in Mittenwald, where he received his diploma in 1992. After his civilian service in Munich he moved to Chicago, where he mostly did repairs and restorations in the workshop of Michael Becker for 18 months.

Between 1995 and 2001 he was assistant for Andrea Frandsen and Patrick Robin in their workshop near Angers, France. During this time he started to make his own instruments and since October 2002 he has been working fulltime in his own workshop in Angers. He makes violins, violas and cellos inspired by the Italian instruments from the great «classical» period, but especially from the Amati family and Antonio Stradivari.

He obtained French citizenship in 2015 and is a member of EILA. His instruments are played by professional musicians and soloists all over the world.

For many years he has successfully presented his instruments in international violin making competitions and has won numerous medals: 7 gold (6 viola), 9 silver (3 viola) and 2 bronze.



### AURÉLIEN LEBLANC

Trained in sculpture and then woodworking, I attended the National School of Lutherie in Mirecourt from 2006 to 2009.

I then traveled throughout France, Belgium, and Portugal to expand my knowledge by working with other luthiers.

Today, I design and create violins, violas, and cellos in my workshop in the Dordogne region of France. Always seeking to explore and find balance, I enjoy experimenting with sound and making my own varnishes. Playing the violin, drawing, and sculpting continually nourish my craft as a luthier, infusing my work with both artistic and artisanal sensibilities.

<https://www.leblanc-luthier.com>



## **PHILIPPE MAHU**

In 1988, Philippe Mahu joined the prestigious workshop of Etienne Vatelot, Master Luthier in Paris, where he specialized in the restoration and adjustment of string quartet instruments.

He has had the privilege of working on prestigious instruments for demanding musicians.

Today, with thirty years of experience behind him, he makes his own instruments. Named "Meilleur Ouvrier de France" in 2004 and a member of the jury for the same competition in 2011 and 2018, the quality of his work has been recognized at prestigious international violin-making competitions, where he has won first prizes, honorable mentions, and several gold, silver, and bronze medals (Paris 2009-2011, Mittenwald 2010-2014, Cleveland 2012, Cremona 2015-2021, Poznan 2016).



## **JULIETTE NEHR**

I began my apprenticeship in my father Jean-Pascal Nehr's workshop in 2019. I follow in his footsteps in terms of style, which is mainly based on the 1830s. I work in his workshop, alongside him.



**SOPHIE NICOLLEAU BARBAULT**

Sophie began studying music at the age of 7 by learning the piano, then completed her musical training on the viola at the age of 13, which she played for 15 years. Since 2006, she has been playing the violin in an amateur orchestra.

Passionate about violin making since the age of 15, Sophie graduated from the Mirecourt School of Violin Making in 1994 with distinction.

After working as an assistant to Gilles Orin (Rennes), Roger Lanne (Paris), luthier for the Paris Opera, and V. Schryve (Nantes), she set up her own workshop in 2007 to devote herself mainly to instrument making (violin, viola, cello) and sound adjustment. Her work is inspired by the great masters of Italian violin making of the 17th and 18th centuries. In November 2017, she set up her workshop in the center of Nantes.

She was awarded the title of Master Craftsman in 2018.



**PAUL NOULET**

With 30 years of experience, including 10 years in renowned workshops in the United States, Asia and Europe, Paul Noulet has devoted himself since 2006 exclusively to the manufacture of quartet instruments. Fascinated by the classic violin making of Stradivari, Amati and Guarneri, he draws inspiration from them by directly observing their techniques. He directly nourishes his creations from this culture, in the authentic environment of his Limousin workshop.

Today, Paul Noulet is quite naturally turned towards copying and creation in the strict tradition of this Cremonese heritage.



## **FABIEN PEYRUC**

Fabien Peyruc was born in 1978, and began his apprenticeship in 1999, at the I.P.I.A.L.L. Antonio Stradivari in Cremona, Italy. He finished his training at the School of Stringed Instrument-making in Mirecourt, where he was awarded his Craft Diploma in 2003.

From 2006 to 2009, he worked as an assistant to Bernard Sabatier in Paris, maintaining, restoring and adjusting stringed bowed instruments.

Through his work with Bernard Sabatier, his expertise grew as he observed a large number of 18th and 19th Century French and Italian instruments. In January 2009, he took over the Delfour workshop and settled in Toulouse. He dedicates himself in restoring and creating new instruments. He is a member of the ALAD.F.I. and V.S.A.

From 2010, he obtained some distinctions at violin making competitions. In June 2024, he obtained a silver medal in antiqued violas category at violin making competition ANLAI in Pisogne, Italy.



## **DAMIEN SAINMONT**

After reading science at University, Damien returned to his first love and enrolled at the Violin-Making School in Newark, England. Shortly before graduating with distinction in 2004, he entered the first BVMA Violin-Making competition and won the student prize.

Damien went on to work at some of the most highly regarded workshops, including Florian Leonhard's in London, Pierre Mastrangelo's in Lausanne and Kogge-Gateau's in Berlin where he was entrusted to carry out extensive restorations on the most valuable instruments of the Italian masters.

In 2015, Damien established himself in Lausanne where he continues restoring valuable instruments. From time to time, he builds instruments, using the precious knowledge he gained on working on old instruments. He highly values the exchange with colleagues and is now teaching at advanced courses within ALADFI and BVMA.

Being a viola player allows Damien to better understand the needs of musicians when he carries out repairs, services and sound-adjustments, and is establishing a strong reputation for this.



### SEBASTIEN SEIXAS

Born in 1974 in Orléans (France), I studied violin making at the National School of violin making in Mirecourt from 1989 to 1994 with Michel Legeard and Dominique Nicosia. In parallel, I worked in Orléans with Bruno Dreux, starting my professional career as soon as 1993. Since 1997, my workshop is based in Athens (Greece).

After learning the basis of violin making in the French tradition in Mirecourt, I adopted the classical Italian making technique as early as 1992.

Rather than copying the instruments of the old Italian Masters, I've focused on understanding the process that led to their creation, assuming that each technique implies a final result, both in tone and aesthetics.

My aim is to make instruments which, without being copies, have the sound and feel of 18th century Italian instruments.

In this logic of creation, since 2004, all my instruments are build on original models that I have designed.

Beside violin making, I have developed an artistic body of work ranging from music (electroacoustic creation, installations) to photography, through video, danse and writing.



### ROBIN SZOMBATH

Robin Szombath graduated 2014 from his four-year apprenticeship at the School of Arts in Hallstatt (Austria) with distinction.

He worked in renowned ateliers in Austria, France, Ukraine, Switzerland and Portugal, at Tomáš Kaiser in Bratislava and Jürgen Manthey in Leipzig, where he crafted violins, violas, and violoncellos.

After receiving the master craftsman's certificate with distinction, he opened his new master craftsman atelier in Porto.

He was honoured to receive the 1st prize "Best Instrument" award in Austria and the bronze medal at the XIII Concorso Internazionale di Liuteria di Pisogne, further recognizing his dedication to craftsmanship and innovation in instrument making.

