

GAETANO ANTONIAZZI

WRITTEN BY SEAN BISHOP

Gaetano Antoniazzi is regarded as the final link between classical Italian making of the Cremonese school and the start of the modern violin dynasty of the Bisiach–Antoniazzi school of Milan at the turn of the 20th century.

He was born in Cremona in 1825 and like many makers he was something of an itinerant worker, who had to work as a carpenter to survive. Thus we have little evidence of his early making. He left Cremona around the early 1850s for Mantua, at that time the home of Giuseppe Ceruti. We can assume that Gaetano knew Ceruti from Cremona, as well as Ceruti's more famous son, Enrico.

Antoniazzi was back in Cremona in the 1860s, finally settling in Milan in 1870. His instruments before that date seem extremely rare, suggesting that he may have been working as a carpenter then as well. Instruments with his labels only appear from the late 1870s onwards. In the 1890s he produced some instruments for the flourishing workshop of Leandro Bisiach, before dying in 1897.

Antoniazzi and his two sons, Riccardo and Romeo, took violin making into the world of modern Italian lutherie as it is known today.

●
MAKER
GAETANO ANTONIAZZI
●
NATIONALITY
ITALIAN
●
BORN
1825
●
DIED
1897
●
INSTRUMENT
VIOLIN
●
DATE
1894

CONSTRUCTION

The violin shown here is a fine example of Gaetano's best work, made rather in the style of both of the Cerutis – if they had continued their making into the 1890s. The corners have become shorter, pulled in from the excess of the flamboyant G.B. Ceruti, to be almost described as 'stubby'. Also, unlike the Cerutis, he left his instruments unpinned. The choice of wood for this instrument is among his best; this area often brought down the quality of his instruments, probably owing to financial reasons.

ARCHINGS, EDGEWORK AND PURFLING

The height of the front arching is 15.5mm and the back slightly bigger at 15.8mm. On first appearance the violin seems rather flat in construction; however, at no point is the violin actually thus. The purfling is extremely neat and refined, and very similar to Enrico Ceruti's, with very short bee-stings to the corners' edges. The edgework itself is quite pronounced, with the back in particular showing a very high level of craftsmanship.

F-HOLES

The cut of the f-holes is extremely neat, and they have a very elegant and slender feel. The nicks are deep, very pointed and almost opposite each other.

SCROLL

The scroll has beautiful deep fluting, in a style reminiscent of Stradivari's Amatisé period. It indicates Antoniazzi's high level of workmanship, even though he made relatively few instruments.

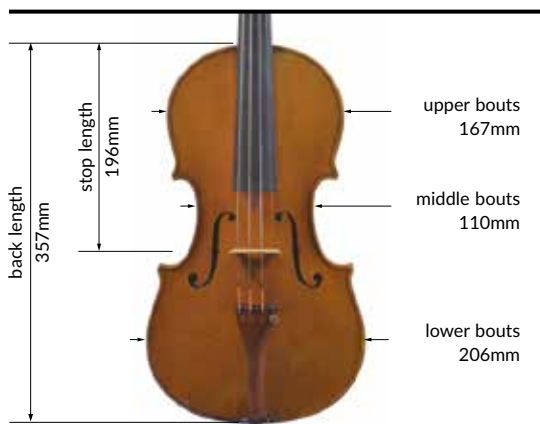
VARNISH

A golden ground brings out the lightly flamed back with Antoniazzi's very thinly applied varnish. It is almost the definition of delicate, and shows off the wood to its full effect.

LABEL

The label reads 'Antoniazzi Gaetano Cremonese / fece a Milano l'anno 18..' It appears to be original and looks very similar to those of his son Riccardo; however, the word 'Milano' appears to be a cut-out stuck over another word. The year's last two digits are written in ink. >





All measurements taken with callipers



