



ERNST HEINRICH ROTH

8 Generations of Violin Making

The Roth family tradition of violin making reaches back 8 Generations

1730 Johann Gotlob Roth
1774 Johann Georg Roth
1809 Johann Christian Roth
1852 Gustav Robert Roth
1877 Ernst Heinrich Roth
1900 Gustav Albert Roth
1938 Ernst Heinrich Roth 11
1966 E.H. Wilhelm Roth

100 Years Ernst Heinrich Roth – Workshop

Ernst Heinrich Roth was born in 1877 in Markneukirchen, a little town at the centre of the "Vogtland Music Corner" in Germany, where musical instrument making is a tradition since centuries. In 1902, the young Master Violin Maker founded his own workshop which soon became well known nationwide. The success was based on the combination of masterly skills and the business competence of Ernst Heinrich Roth. Due to the high quality of his master violins, the number of satisfied customers rose steadily prior to World War One. During and immediately after WW1 business was subdued due to depressed economic circumstances. At this time one of the founder's sons, Gustav Albert carried on the tradition and continued to improve in Markneukirchen.

The increasing prosperity of the family business in the founding town of Markneukirchen came to an end when all private companies were put under state control by the Communist government in Eastern Germany after WW2. The family migrated to the West and the old business connections could be re-established. Soon the business prospered again through increased demand for the high quality instruments in the free world.

Today, Ernst Heinrich's son Wilhelm is his most important support. Wilhelm Roth has been educated as a violinmaker in the famous Violin Making School in Mittenwald Germany. After completing his skills during a period as a journeyman in Canada and the United States, Wilhelm Roth has joined his father's workshop. His focus is in the making of Master instruments and the further improvement of the lacquering technique.

Over a period of 100 years, the superior quality of Ernst Heinrich Roth instruments has created a reputation for excellence worldwide.

Roth Perspectives

Wood

Master violinmaker Ernst Heinrich Roth II personally selects on the finest timber from all available sources. The wood is stored for a minimum time of 5 years. In storage at the Roth workshop are rare timbers up to 50 years and older which are used for the finest master instruments.

Making an Instrument

Body

The process of making an instrument starts with the classification and selection of the timbers for the different models. All rough preparations of the wood are made by machines. Then the fine work of the Violin maker begins. The wood is now worked with planes and cleaned with scrapers until ideally matching dimensions of thickness for top and back of a particular model are established. Then the rib cage is attached, which was previously shaped over a frame. Now the f holes are carefully carved out with carving knives. The bass bar from split spruce is fixed and purflings laid into the cut grooves. Then the rough body is cleaned with scrapers.

Neck

The rough neck is prepared with machines. Then the scroll is shaped and fine finished with scroll gauges. The peg box is carved out. The fingerboard is temporarily attached and finally the neck is fitted to the body.

Varnishing

This is a traditional process where masterly skills are required. Ernst Heinrich Roth only uses natural substances. He makes all stains and varnishes for his instruments by himself and he personally applies the varnish on many instruments.

First the instrument is stained. Then the base varnish is applied and left to dry. After numerous applications of varnish, long drying periods and repeated sanding, the instrument is finally polished.

Now the exactly shaped and polished fine ebony fingerboard can be permanently glued on to the neck. The pegs are individually fitted to the peg holes and strings are attached. Sound post and bridge are precisely positioned to warrant the best possible sound characteristics of the instrument.

The instrument is test played and goes through a final check for tonal quality and quality of workmanship.

Finally each individual instrument from the Ernst Heinrich Roth workshop receives its certificate of origin in which the instrument number, model and year of creation are documented to warrant that a new violin has entered the world of music which will hold and over time will increase its value and tonal excellence.