

else's. Anyone who actually intends to emulate his work would likely watch closer and dig out more tips than I did. If you are not locked into classical guitar making as practiced by the Old Guys, I think you'll get your money's worth from these DVDs.

Any complaints? Yes. Speaking as a bald guy, Bogdanovich has way too much hair. Other than that, it's a job well done.

—John Calkin

### ***The Conservation, Restoration, and Repair of Stringed Instruments and Their Bows***

Edited by Tom Wilder

ISBN 978-1-904982-41-8, October 2010

International Pernambuco Conservation Initiative Canada

www.ipci-canada.org \$1,395.

This is an epic book — three books, really. It comes in a box about the size of a full case of soup, and weighs that much, too. It represents some years of work, and covers a wide range of topics beyond what the title specifies. I count 142 separate articles over the three volumes.

Readers who are familiar with the book *Violin Restoration* by Hans Weisshaar and Margaret Shipman should not expect something similar here. In fact there seems to be very little overlap. The Weisshaar book was written mainly as a shop manual, detailing a random selection of more esoteric but standard repairs in a consistent step-by-step style. The IPCI books' articles are more limited in use and even more specialized.

The first book centers on philosophy and background issues, with sections on materials and conservation, restoration practice, history and connoisseurship, documentation, and general materials considerations. These are the "heavy" articles, insiders' views on issues that aren't normally discussed in magazine articles. They form the context for the more practically oriented remaining volumes, and I don't think I've ever seen so many good articles about what might be generally called background business issues in one place.

The second and third volumes deal with instruments and bows, respectively. These are the nuts and bolts articles, the reason that most people will think they need to own the set.

Though the books will appeal to anyone who's involved in violin repair, they will be most useful to those who are doing higher-level repairs and are looking for new and different ways to perform familiar procedures. Do you need to know more than one way to do a plaster cast, or have a hard time finding the very thin latex sheeting commonly used for casting and want to make your own? This is the book to read. There's an entire section of nine articles devoted to specialized casting and casting methods, some of them incredibly innovative and clever. I thought that since I'd been in the business I would have an easy time here, would scan the books seeing familiar procedures, and get a general idea of how well the material was edited, and that would be it. Instead, I discovered a whole new bunch of ways to do familiar things, and ended up reading many more articles than I'd originally intended.

Take, for instance, Quentin Playfair's "Making a Mould with Acrylic" in which he describes a way of making transparent clamping counterparts by heat-sagging acrylic sheeting over plaster forms. What a great idea! There are two whole sections (theoretical in the first volume, and practical in the second) on cleaning solutions and techniques that center on both modern materials and on modern respect for the understanding and appreciation of original coatings.

Aside from the setup, surfaces, and molds sections, there are also separate sections for body repairs and neck/head repairs. The bow book follows a similar form, with divisions for basics, stick, and frog.

Not being a bow guy, I just scanned quickly through the bow book. It was more of the same, and I assume of the same high quality. Bow repair is particularly arcane. Because of the tiny scale, the repairs are much more difficult than on violins, and because a bow contains much less information for the connoisseur, and that information is especially delicate, bow workers are a fastidious lot. There's even an article titled "Three Methods for Preserving Details in Old Bows" that deals with that problem. Other geeky bow topics have names like "Repairing a Snapped Bow with a Double Internal Conical Graft Bushing" and "Replacing a Pearl Eye in the Frog: An Improved Method Using Hydrochloric Acid." You get the idea.

For me, the least satisfactory things in the book were the more mundane subjects. The first section of the second book deals with basic maintenance and setup, and is to a great extent representative of a spectrum of old bad ideas regarding adjustment, with little new or useful, or even accurate, from my experience. Also, there were several articles on keeping records that would perhaps be useful for beginners, but were hardly earthshaking, especially in competition with the technical repair articles.

My final concern is with the packaging. I have a suspicion that the desire for a fancy package has compromised the series' structural integrity. It appears to me that a good balance wasn't struck between flexibility and stiffness in the binding, and I can see these books rapidly disintegrating in the same way that my otherwise superb Charles Beare exposition of the 1987 Cremona Stradivari exhibition has. I'm also not wild about the matte paper, which compromises the illustrations to a small extent. These are small issues, though, and perhaps the specialized nature of this series will result in their durability not being tested to the fullest.

—Michael Darnton

### ***Adjusting a Steel String Guitar***

Kent Carlos Everett

ISBN 0-9764635-6-6

DVD, \$29.95

www.everettguitars.com

I used to run into Kent Everett at Merle Fest, and perhaps the GAL conventions. But I've become such a hermit that I don't travel anymore, and I haven't seen Kent in years. The loss is mine. He's always exuberant and animated, large hands making big gestures in the air. It improves your day just to be in his company, and that's exactly the Kent Carlos Everett you get in this DVD.

The workshop is set up in a classroom, with Everett at the front desk. Totally in his element among luthiers and wannabe luthiers, he sets out to explain, step-by-step, how to set up a guitar. Things have to be done in a specific order, or step three might disrupt what you did in step two. He's pretty clear that the way he does it is the best way. And in fact, it's the way that every knowledgeable repairman or builder proceeds with a setup. Adjust the neck, adjust the saddle, check the nut slots, and so on, working from the grossest steps to the finest. It's not rocket science; it's common sense. At least, once you understand it.