



THE STRAD'S PICK OF UP-AND-COMING MAKERS AND MUSICIANS



ALISHA NEWBOLD

RYAN SOLTIS

A COFFEE TABLE MARKED THE GENESIS OF RYAN SOLTIS'S

career in lutherie. 'I was doing woodworking at school and my father took me to a violin maker to buy some lumber for my project,' he says. 'I'd never met one in my life, and I thought it was the neatest thing. I said to my father that day: "I'm going to be a violin maker."'

Soltis was true to his word. He graduated from the Violin Making School of America (VMSA) in Salt Lake City in 2000 and went to work in David Folland's Minnesota workshop for two years. 'He brought out the very best workmanship I had inside of me,' says Soltis. 'We were

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always working to the highest level of craftsmanship and nothing was ever rushed.' Soltis now works from his home in Salt Lake City, selling his instruments through dealers Reuning & Son and John R. Waddle.

A meeting with fellow VMSA alumnus Sam Zygmuntowicz at the Oberlin Violin Makers Workshop led to an opportunity that has contributed enormously to Soltis's development: 'It was a bit of a long shot but I asked him if I could do work experience at his studio in New York. He said yes, and it went so well that he asked me to go out there more often.' Two years on, the young maker still spends several weeks every two or three months in New York, watched over by his mentor as he works on his instruments. 'Under his instruction I have learnt to meet the needs of top players,' says Soltis.

Although Soltis has made four cellos and five violas, he focuses on violins, modelling most on a 1736 Guarneri 'del Gesù' but with what he describes as 'my own feel'. He prefers Bosnian maple over American wood ('it gives the sound more colour and a broader range of overtones'), while he aims for a tone that is 'very rich and dark but with a kind of sizzle on top of it, a certain brilliance to go with that darkness'.

Soltis is a true craftsman, and his plans include building a house and workshop in rural Idaho: 'I want to be a large part of the building process. I have this need to construct things.' **Catherine Payne**

BORN New Jersey, 1976

PRIZES VSA Competition 2004: workmanship award (cello); VSA Competition 2006: tone award (violin)

WEBSITE www.soltisviolins.com



LINDSAY DEUTSCH

MIRANDA GRANGER

LOS ANGELES IS FULL OF ARTISTIC OPPORTUNITIES IF YOU

fight for them, or so believes violinist and Colburn Conservatory of Music student Lindsay Deutsch. 'From my balcony I see the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion and Walt Disney Concert Hall,' says the 22-year-old, who lives in 'downtown LA,' and who often spots artists such as Yo-Yo Ma having lunch in the neighbourhood. 'It's so easy to just walk across the street and introduce myself to, say, Miguel Harth-Bedoya – it led to my Fort Worth Symphony debut in 2005.'

A similar situation has led to performances with the Colorado Symphony in April and the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra in May, both to be conducted by Jeffrey Kahane: 'A few years ago Kahane was working with my school orchestra, and although I was very nervous, I asked him if I could play for him. He let me perform right there and then some of Corigliano's Chaconne from the movie *The Red Violin* and the next thing I knew he'd invited me to his Green Music Festival.'

Film music is one of Deutsch's *raison d'être*: she plays the second movement of Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto in the new Robert de Niro movie *The Good Shepherd*, and in 2004 she performed music from *Schindler's List* at a gala honouring John Williams. For Deutsch, it's all about attracting more people to classical music. 'You're always hearing about half-empty music halls,' she says. 'So with my solo and orchestral concerts I might play Beethoven or Brahms, but I'll add music that the general audience will immediately respond to, be that jazz, movie tunes or Spanish music.' She also runs a classical music website for children which attracts around 70,000 hits per month.

Deutsch moved to Los Angeles eight years ago to study with Robert Lipsett – and she's still with him ('although my playing ventures out of the box, he's only encouraged me'). In 2005 she hit the news after a 1742 Seraphin violin, worth \$850,000 and on loan to her from the Mandell Collection, was stolen from her car. The instrument was later found in an alleyway but the experience made her 'even more determined'. And she is: over the next year she has her studies, a disc out on Yarlung Records in the summer (including Gershwin's *Fantasy on Porgy and Bess* and Piazzolla's *Four Seasons of Buenos Aires*), and many more performances around North America. **Cecilia Leung**

BORN Houston, 1984

2007 PERFORMANCES Colorado Symphony/Kahane: April; Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra/Kahane: May

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