

Preview***Uno Stradivari per la Gente*
at Reinberger Chamber Hall**

by Mike Telin



“What is truly incredible to me is that violins built by Stradivari by the candlelight, today shine bright under the spotlights of venues around the world,” says renowned Italian violinist [Matteo Fedeli](#).

On Sunday, April 28th beginning at 7:30 pm, Matteo Fedeli brings his *Uno Stradivari per la Gente* (A Stradivari for the People) project to Reinberger Chamber Music Hall at Severance Hall. The concert is presented by the Hon. Consulate of Italy in Cleveland and the Consulate of Italy in

Detroit and is a special initiative that marks 2013 as the Year of Italian Culture in the USA. Although Sunday’s performance is sold out, a second concert has been scheduled for Saturday, June 15 in Cincinnati.

Sunday’s concert features the music of Saint-Saëns, Franck, Bartók, Kreisler and Rachmaninoff and will be performed on the "1726 Grand Stradivarius", which belonged to the Adams collection, and was played by Fritz Kreisler and Pablo de Sarasate.

“A Stradivarius for the People” is a project that finds Matteo Fedeli playing the best violins ever made, including “Il Cremonese” 1715, “Vesuvius” 1727, “King of Prussia” 1703, “Sandars” 1695, “Maurin Rubinoff” 1731, “DaVinci” 1725, “Duke of Alba” 1719 and “Reynier, ex Napoleon III” 1681. Mr. Fedeli has been honored for his works in combining charity initiatives with great musical events. He was awarded the Knightly Order pro Merito Melitensi and is Knight of Merit of Sacred Military Constantinian Order of Saint George. He has also been involved with AISM, the Italian Multiple Sclerosis Association.

Matteo Fedeli graciously agreed to answer questions via e-mail.

Mike Telin: What caused you to create “Uno Stradivari per la Gente” and why did you think it was an important thing to do?

Matteo Fedeli: The idea for this project was born a few years ago, on the occasion of a benefit concert held in Milan. The hall was extremely crowded, and the audience could almost touch the Stradivarius! Truly an extraordinary experience, deeply moving for the

public, but equally so for me: in fact, it was my first time playing a Stradivarius. A rare, exceptional, priceless instrument. This experience gave me such joy and it was such a privilege for me that I decided I wanted to share it with everybody, music lovers, connoisseurs, experts, but also with those attending a classical music recital perhaps for the very first time, just out of sheer curiosity.

MT: In your biography it says, "In fact the world in which great lute maker's instruments move, obey a code of extreme discretion. Armed escorts, strict delivery and transfer protocol, diplomatic missions with musicians and owners carried out on tip toe by extremely careful curators." Can you talk about or describe the "code of extreme discretion"?

MF: It is of the utmost importance to be able to guarantee the safety and integrity of the violins. Often times, my recitals take place inside churches, cloisters, castles or halls. Places in which the audience literally surrounds me, as if in a warm embrace. In other instances, at the end of the program I show the instrument, and tell anecdotes on Antonio Stradivari's art of making violins. The audience is captivated by both, and slowly starts inching forward, closer and closer to me, in an attempt to reach the first row, thus putting at risk the safety of the violin. To prevent any possible accidents, the presence of privately hired, security personnel is indispensable. Additionally, there is the issue of transporting the instruments safely during both national and international events. As a consequence, travel schedules, routes and means of transportations are very carefully examined and chosen. You also know that musicians are notorious for being a bit absent-minded, therefore it is imperative that the violins be always escorted and safeguarded by professionals traveling with me.

MT: On your website you list a number of violins; which ones will you be using for this concert?

MF: In Cleveland I will play the invaluable violin "1726 Grand Stradivarius", which belonged to the Adams collection, and was played by Fritz Kreisler and Pablo de Sarasate. It is a magnificent instrument, dating back to the golden production phase of the most famous "liutaio" (or violin maker) that has ever lived. During this time, Stradivari better than any other before or after him in history, brought together the best woods, astounding manufacturing skills and his magical paint, to accomplish a quality of sounds unknown up until then, and to these days still unparalleled.

Recently, I performed with this violin in the Duomo of Milano for an audience of 5,000 as well as at the ONU (Organizzazione Nazioni Unite, United Nation Organization) in Geneva, in the Assembly Hall.

MT: How do you go about choosing which instruments to use?

MF: The programs I choose to perform are always varied and captivating: *Cantabile, Virtuoso and Romantico*. Numerous composers, many pieces. Thus, I purposely choose flexible and dynamic instruments well suited for the different sonorities. Several of the precious violins with which I already have had the privilege to perform, up until then had remained locked up and only displayed in museum settings, or in private residences by

their wealthy owners, but had never been regularly played. This does not allow for a “quick response” on the part of the violin, thus presenting me with a real challenge.

MT: You have a wonderful program; why did you choose these pieces?

MF: One of the prerogatives of “Uno Stradivari per la Gente” is to present diversified audiences with a friendly, appealing, beautiful and captivating musical program. Hence, my choice to create a lithe, dynamic musical format. Among the pieces, Bela Bartok’s *Danze Rumene*, with their characteristic Hungarian, folkloristic sound; or the song-like quality of Kreisler; continuing on, with some of the best chamber music by Franck and his passionate *Allegro della Sonata in La Major*. Also, a special piece by Saint-Saëns with his *Danse Macabre*, inspired by a sonnet I will recite for the audience.

MT: You are committed to charitable causes such as AISM, the Italian Multiple Sclerosis Association and you also perform a lot in nursing homes with your Stradivari and the “music of the heart” project; why is it important to for artists to be part of projects that give back to the community.

MF: During my musical seasons, I devote a number of concerts to charitable or fund raising associations, and contribute with my music to help them reach their goals. I find it fascinating that worthwhile causes can be supported by an instrument that is almost 300 years old! I so strongly believe in the importance of charitable work, that I became the testimonial for AISM (Italian Association for Multiple Sclerosis), and in recognition for my contribution to this cause was awarded the Knighthood of the Order of Malta. However, sometimes even this work is not enough! Therefore, last year I performed a special cycle of thirty concerts playing for elderly in nursing homes. They thanked me profusely and reminded me how fascinating music is, and what power it can unleash. It conveys a universal message, capable of reaching every individual, bypassing reason and going straight to the heart.

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