

A TEMPO



Rare Violin Rescued From Demolition Site Arrives at Curtis

The Gasparo da Salò "Ex-Kux"
is praised for its dark, rich sound.

A RARE, 16TH-CENTURY ITALIAN violin entered Curtis's instrument collection last spring, following a tumultuous journey worthy of a Hollywood screenplay.

The Gasparo da Salò "Ex-Kux" violin is a rare specimen, built in 1575, and one of about 80 surviving instruments by the Brescian maker. In the 20th century, it was owned by Wilhelm Kux, a prominent Viennese banker, followed by Joseph Malfitano, a violinist in the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, who played it from the 1950s through the '70s.

The violin's most recent owner was Avron Maletzky, a Seattle pediatrician and amateur violinist who promised it as a gift to Curtis. But over the years, Dr. Maletzky had forgotten where he left the instrument, and it was last seen around 2016.



Dr. Maletzky died in January 2021 at age 82, and his former Seattle home was slated for demolition. As an excavator moved in, scooping out sheetrock and insulation, the operator noticed the metal handle and leather strap of a violin case. It became clear that Dr. Maletzky had secreted the violin in the wall of an upstairs bathroom, and it was now within inches of the machine's trowel. Demolition was paused.

In December 2021, the building contractor brought the violin to Seattle luthiers Rafael and Mercedes Carrabba, who identified it after reading about its disappearance in an online copy of Curtis's alumni newsletter. "It looked like many instruments that had just been sitting in a closet for ten years," said Mr. Carrabba, who restored it to playing shape. "The strings were loose, and the bridge had fallen down. But it was in great condition."

The Carrabbas contacted Austin Stewart, Curtis's director of planned and major gifts, who confirmed the school's interest. After consultations with lawyers, the instrument arrived at Curtis on March 19 and was welcomed into the school's stringed instrument collection. Two violin students—Matthew Hakkarainen (Violin '22) and Jinyoung Yoon (Violin '22)—played it at a small gathering of friends and donors the following month.

Philip J. Kass, the curator of string instruments at Curtis, considers the violin a top example of Gasparo's craftsmanship, with "a dark, rich, buttery sound." As for its future at Curtis, he said, "There are generations of young musicians who will enjoy the experience of playing on a great violin that has 450 years of history behind it."

Mr. Carrabba agreed. "So many instruments, through war, fire, and accidents, are gone," he said. "It was *that* close for this great violin."



Paul Bryan

New Leadership Structure Brings Curtis Its First-Ever Provost

Paul Bryan will lead the school's accreditation efforts.

This past summer brought leadership changes to Curtis, as Paul Bryan stepped down as dean for a varied new role, and three other faculty were promoted to expanded new positions.

Ed Gazouleas (Viola '84), a member of Curtis's viola faculty since 2017, was named the school's first-ever provost, and now oversees education-related activities at the school. He continues as the Gie and Lisa Liem Artistic Director, a position he assumed in 2021.

Nick DiBerardino (Composition '18) was appointed senior associate dean of performance studies, adding to his directorship of the composition studies department and Ensemble 20/21. And Amy Yang (Piano '06), who has served on the piano faculty since 2011, became associate dean of piano studies and artistic initiatives.

Mr. Bryan (Trombone '93), who joined the staff in 1993 as assistant orchestra librarian and worked his way up to dean in 2013, now has an expansive new title: director of assessment and accreditation; musician life cycle consultant. He will continue to lead Curtis's institutional accreditation efforts, which primarily involve reporting to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

"It should be something that someone devotes their time to in a very dedicated manner," Mr. Bryan told *Overtones*. "The goal of accreditation is really to continuously improve what we do at Curtis. We are reporting to the Commission, and they are assessing us and overseeing our progress."

Mr. Bryan will also focus on the two bookends of what has become known as the "musician life cycle" at Curtis: prospective student engagement and alumni activities. Additionally, he is returning to the classroom for the first time in several years, teaching the undergraduate Elements of Conducting course, and an elective pedagogy course in the career studies department.

"With these positions Curtis will deepen and strengthen the ways we serve our students, faculty, and our entire community," Curtis President Roberto Díaz said in a message to faculty and staff.

Mr. Bryan now begins his sixth role in nearly 30 years as a staff member at Curtis. "I'm so happy and so grateful to continue at Curtis and to re-envision and recreate what I do for the school," he said.



Left: The Curtis Symphony Orchestra with conductor Osmo Vänskä. Below: Vince Ford (right) with lighting designer Christopher Frey.



Curtis Starts Its Own Label

Curtis builds its digital presence worldwide.

→ **THE CONSERVATORY IN** November announced the launch of Curtis Studio, a new in-house label designed to expand its global reach and make it possible for Curtis alumni, faculty, and students to create and release high-quality digital recordings. The debut recording, released December 6, features Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade* in a performance by conductor Osmo Vänskä and the Curtis Symphony Orchestra.

Curtis Studio recordings will be available on all major streaming platforms (including Spotify, Apple Music, and Amazon Music), the result of an affiliation with Platoon, a London-based distributor. Video releases are also planned, to be available in Dolby Atmos on

Apple Music. Overseeing the initiative is Vince Ford, Curtis's senior vice president of digital strategy and innovation.

Curtis President and CEO Roberto Díaz expects Curtis Studio will expand the school's digital presence while enabling students to learn about the recording process. "The three pillars of Curtis—teaching, touring, and technology—will each be propelled by this groundbreaking initiative," he said. "Curtis Studio presents an opportunity to share our internationally renowned musicianship globally in an accessible way."

Future releases include a solo piano recording by Michelle Cann (Piano '13) featuring the works of Florence Price (Sonata in E minor and *Fantasia Nègre* Nos. 1, 2, and 4) and Margaret Bonds's *Spiritual Suite*. Also planned is the recording debut of Trio Zimbalist, and recordings by the Dover Quartet, the Penelope P. Wakins Ensemble in Residence.

The *Scheherazade* performance was part of Curtis's 2022 multimedia installation, *Immersive Scheherazade*, which invited audiences to sit alongside live musicians performing the work while surrounded by 30-foot-high projections of the orchestra. Mr. Ford said the virtuoso score offered an ideal starting point for the label. "We are thrilled to share these vibrant performances through Curtis Studio," he said.

More details are available at Curtis.edu/studio.

Remembering Nina von Maltzahn

The philanthropist was behind the largest gift in Curtis's modern history.

NINA BARONESS VON MALTZAHN, an American-Swiss philanthropist who endowed a host of key programs and positions at Curtis, died on May 22 at her home in Uruguay. She was 81 years old.

A global citizen who put down roots in Philadelphia, Uruguay and Berlin, Baroness von Maltzahn had a 15-year association with Curtis, in which she endowed faculty chairs in guitar and violin, the president's chair, and a student fellowship. Her support enabled the founding of the harp studio in Lenfest Hall, the string quartet program, and Curtis on Tour, and assisted alumni who were hit hard by the pandemic.

But most consequential was a \$55 million gift that she made in 2016—the largest since Curtis's founding—which endowed Curtis on Tour and the string quartet program, among other initiatives at the school.

Baroness von Maltzahn was introduced to Curtis in 2007 by trustee Robert Mundheim, a fellow patron of the American Academy of Berlin. That November, she pledged \$250,000 to create the Nina von Maltzahn Fellowship, held by one student annually. She joined Curtis's board of trustees in 2010, and was elected chair in 2014, serving in that capacity until 2016. Fellow board members knew her for her energy and passion for Curtis's mission. In 2021 she was named chair emerita.

"I was inspired to begin working with Curtis because it is crucial to me that my philanthropic efforts help children," the baroness told the newsletter of the American Academy of Berlin in 2012. In addition to her support of Curtis, she founded the Fundación Retoño,

a nonprofit organization that addresses educational inequities in Uruguay, and One Child, One World, a community-based organization in Athens.

Born Nina Maria Gorrissen on January 30, 1941, she was the daughter of a German banker and a journalist mother who emigrated to New York City on the eve of World War II. At age 15 she moved to Switzerland where she completed her education, and in 1970, married and relocated to Montevideo, Uruguay. She later divorced and worked in hotel marketing, before marrying Lothar von Maltzahn in 1990.

Baroness von Maltzahn was a polyglot, speaking seven languages. She studied piano as a child and became a lifelong opera lover after attending a performance of *Der Rosenkavalier* with her grandmother.

"It is impossible to overstate Nina's impact on our school and our community," said President and CEO Roberto Díaz, who holds the Nina von Maltzahn President's Chair. "Although she will be hugely missed, she will never be forgotten—Nina is an indelible part of our school and our hearts."

Ms. von Maltzahn is survived by her husband, Lothar von Maltzahn, his three children and five grandchildren, and by her cousins Michael Kellen and Marina Kellen French and their adult children.



DAVID SWANSON