



## “Cremona, A place to Play”

### Project

Cremona, an Italian city in the Po Valley, in Lombardy Region, with 300.000 inhabitants in all the province, is recognized all over the world as the Capital of the Violin Making and the City of the Music. The Chamber of Commerce and the other institutions help the musical groups, as youth orchestras, amateur Orchestras, Choir, Bands and chamber music groups to organize the concerts which are strictly connected with their didactic activity and promote the events in order to support the performances with a selected and numerous audience. Cremona in a way offers a unique stage to perform and a unique history connected with music: from here the title of the project “Cremona a Place to play”. The groups, directly or through a tour operator, sustain the costs for travel, accommodation, food, masterclasses, instruments renting and locations. They usually perform everywhere in the squares, Theaters, Auditorium, public gardens, old palaces, open air corners and old Churches. The audience management is another side of the phenomenon, basically with the use of the social media and with the traditional media which are always interested in promoting concerts, Cremona can provide audience to each concert. The Chamber of Commerce is involved in this project and leads it because musical tourism is one of the most powerful way for the economical development of the city and for the development of the Cremonese violinmaking too.

### Context and previous experience

In recent years, Cremona have been organising musical masterclasses where groups of students, musicians and amateur orchestra, belonging to an International context, reach Cremona to learn playing instruments from professional teachers and musicians. Cremona, mainly for string instruments, it is considered as a key destination and environment. Cremona is indeed the home of violin making, since 5 centuries string instruments have been crafted following the tradition of the great masters of the past, Amati, Guarneri, Stradivari and Bergonzi. Nowadays, approximately 170 violin making workshops are located in Cremona, keeping it alive the craftsmanship heritage awarded by Unesco in 2012 in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. On 5 December 2012, UNESCO inscribed the "violin making know-how" of the city of Cremona to the Representative List of Intangible Heritage of Humanity. It is a great result for Lombardy, Cremona and its territory, as well as for all those who have worked towards establishing the prestige of the Cremonese violin making tradition in



the world. The art of making bowed stringed instruments in Cremona developed in the sixteenth century with Andrea Amati and continued on with the luthiers of his family and with the Guarneri family; the art was perfected in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by Antonio Stradivari. The distinguishing feature of the Cremonese school of violin making is its ability to create the "shape" of bowed string instruments, especially the violin, according to the criteria of excellence established by the creativity and ingenuity of the great masters of the past. This knowledge has been passed down through the ages from master to student, often from father to son, and refined in practice, through exclusively manual methods and an in-depth knowledge of materials and construction techniques. This know-how is then adapted to produce the best acoustic response for every hand made product: no two instruments are ever alike.

The unique skill of Cremonese violinmakers is due to the presence of the Antonio Stradivari International School of Violin Making, founded in 1938, and the bond created with local makers during the apprenticeship period. Today there are 154 shops in Cremona specialized in making and repairing bowed string instruments. Lutherie characterises the city and defines its identity: the violin is a symbol that is universally associated with the cultural and artistic excellence of Cremona. The recognition by UNESCO gives new impetus to an every day reality, which is expressed in the daily work routine but also in the Museums and Archives that display masterpieces and tell the story of the city through the history of the most important families of Cremonese violinmakers.

Awareness, now largely diffused, of the exceptional character of traditional Cremonese violin making, places Cremona in the centre of an international network of students, makers, buyers, enthusiasts and tourists. The inclusion to the UNESCO list will enhance this process of international trade and will provide new impetus to a reality that is changing rapidly; the Museo del Violino, which was inaugurated on 14 September 2014, will further aid this effort. The new museum recounts the origins and history of the violin, its construction method, and the lives of the most important families of Cremoneseviolin makers. At the same time it also displays a number of masterpieces under the same roof that were previously housed in various palazzos throughout the city

Already in the past, thanks to the presence of high level violin makers able to "fine tune" the instruments according to the musicians needs, the link between musicians and violin makers has been capable of creating mutual learning and knowledge transfer. The great Claudio Monteverdi, moreover, has been able to give birth to the melodramma, the basis of the modern opera, where the use of several string instruments contribute to create a unique atmosphere in his works.



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In 2007 and again in 2019 the Chamber of Commerce organized together with the European String Teachers Association (ESTA) the first and the second International Conference in Italy. More than 400 teachers and players came to Cremona to participate to this event.

In 2010 the Chamber of Commerce organized the first Cremona Summer Festival edition with around 40 participants from South Korea and Europe and started to promote the Masterclass Project.

This project has been called Cremona Summer Festival during Summer and Cremona Music Festival during the rest of the year.

In the table below there are the figures of the Masterclass Project.

Masterclass	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Students	40	220	392	393	583	1.681	1.590	1.595	1.881	2.303
Teachers and parentsi	5	24	137	149	141	439	377	411	375	711
Total	45	244	529	542	724	2.120	1.967	2.006	2.256	3.014
Concerts	7	23	36	56	64	117	108	111	112	176
Audience	1.000	4.700	6.340	8.400	10.000	14.040	12.960	13.320	13.440	21.120
Accomodation*	12.000	50.000	120.000	125.000	150.000	286.000	265.000	270.000	304.000	406.000
Food*	6.000	33.000	88.000	120.000	160.000	318.000	295.000	300.000	338.000	452.000

\*Estimated values of the expences of the participants, without considering the purchase of instruments and other expences

In 2015, the Expo Milan year, the Chamber of Commerce has organized the 10<sup>th</sup> Edition of the European Festival of Orchestras together with Eofed (European Orchestras Federation) with more than 750 players of every age, from all Europe.

In 2016 there was the International Viola Congress, the first in Italy, with about 500 participants from all over the world.

In 2018 there was the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of “Spring Orchestras and Choir”.

In 2019 there was the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of the Cremona Summer Festival and we hope to start again from 2022, after the pandemic situation due to Covid19.



## **Main scope**

The aim of this project is to promote the transnational circulation of cultural heritage represented by violin making craftsmen' skills and music, by recreating a favourable environment for the encounter between the craftsmen' skills and the great musicians skills and to realize a union among violin makers and musicians. The other aim is to promote cultural exchanges, intercultural dialogue, understanding for cultural diversity and social inclusion and to disseminate the 'culture of innovation' sharing information, knowledge. Through musical masterclasses, concerts and performances students, teachers and even the audience are encouraged to interact to favour knowledge transfer. For this purpose it is foreseen the realization of a favourable setting for the establishment of mutual learning and exchange of experience platforms, the organization of transnational/local events and Festivals, the knowledge of crowdfunding and the knowledge of involving different audiences. The project's aim is to recreate this fruitful melting between musicians, students and violin makers, originating the artistic and musical evolution and to extend this linkage to the public, by including it in the events. All the kind of music and all the kind of instruments can be represented.

### **\* Masterclass (definition)**

A masterclass is a class given to students of a particular discipline by an expert of that discipline—usually music, but also painting, drama, any of the arts, or on any other occasion where skills are being developed. The difference between a normal class and a master class is typically the setup. In a master class, all the students (and often spectators) watch and listen as the master takes one student at a time. The student (typically intermediate or advanced, depending on the status of the master) usually performs a single piece which they have prepared, and the master will give them advice on how to play it, often including anecdotes about the composer, demonstrations of how to play certain passages, and admonitions of common technical errors. The student is then usually expected to play the piece again, in light of the master's comments, and the student may be asked to play a passage repeatedly to attain perfection. Master classes for musical instruments tend to focus on the finer details of attack, tone, phrasing, and overall shape, and the student is expected to have complete control of more basic elements such as rhythm and pitch. The value of the master class setup is that all students can benefit from the master's comments on each piece.