The Bernard Ouchard Bow-Making School in Mirecourt, France, from 1971 to 1981

by

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ABSTRACT

The Bernard Ouchard Bow-Making School in Mirecourt, France,
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Although a violin bow may appear less important than a violin, it is the tool that allows string players to communicate musical expression. Not until the late eighteenth century was it considered to be more than just an accessory sold with a violin. From the early nineteenth century, French bow-makers have led the way in bow-making as proven by their legacy. The French bow-makers of the Tourte family are credited with the establishment of what is now known as the modern bow. But following the First and Second World Wars in the early twentieth century, the tradition of French bow-making, which had been transmitted orally from generation to generation, was nearly lost. In 1971, the French government opened the first official bow-making class with a three-year curriculum under the supervision of Bernard Ouchard (1925-1979) at the Lycée Vuillaume in Mirecourt, France. From 1971 to 1981, the school trained nineteen bow-makers and the superior work of its graduates proves that the goal of keeping this long-standing French tradition has been achieved.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Introduction

Establishment of Mirecourt, France

The history of the violin, including its technical history, is very well documented from the birth of the instrument in Italy circa 1500 to the present day. There are numerous books and websites describing the making of such instruments that analyze and calculate every angle, curve, and dimension, as well as databases detailing the output and characteristics of each instrument-maker. Since the 1960's, violin-making schools have sprung up from Europe to the Asian and the American continents. Currently, in the United States alone, there are currently violin-making schools in Massachusetts, Utah, Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, Oregon and Wisconsin.[1]

On the other hand, the historical and technical documentation of the bow, the violin's inseparable companion, has followed a very different path. The physical and technical development of the modern bow was not implemented until two hundred and fifty years later because of the master bow-maker François Xavier Tourte (1747-1835). For almost two hundred years, until the 1950s, Tourte's concept was used as a basis for all fine bows. And it was Tourte's native France that was the international center of *luthier* education and commerce. The knowledge of bow-making was passed on through oral tradition in the city of Mirecourt, France. Upon finishing their training in the smaller Mirecourt shops, bow-makers would generally look for a position in a fine *luthier* shop in

[1] For more information see: <www.luth.org/links/schools.htm>.

Paris.[2] From Jean-Marie Persoit (1790?-1860?) to Prosper Colas (1842-1919), most famous bow-makers worked, at one point or another, for Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume (1798-1875) in Paris.[3]

The bow's history originated in France, especially in the cities of Paris and Mirecourt, but many were also made in Germany and in England. The international exchanges date back from the late nineteenth century. Some French *luthiers* such as Vuillaume and bow-makers such as Victor Fétique (1872-1933) utilized German makers to create bows.[4] At around the same time, the Bazin family made beautiful copies of bows by the British bow-maker, James Tubbs (1835-1921).[5] The irony of the matter is that the bows by Tubbs were strongly influenced by Tourte models (fig. 1).[6] But all these exchanges were interrupted by the wars that occurred during the first half of the twentieth century. As a result of these wars, the tradition of French violin-making and bow-making was nearly lost.

Figure 1: Violin bow by James Tubbs, copyright Tarisio archives

[2] According to Bernard Millant and Jean-François Raffin, *L'Archet* (Paris: L'Archet, 2000), 3 vols., ninety-five percent of French bow makers moved from Mirecourt to Paris in order to find work in a reputable *luthier* shop. For more information, see Chapter 2.
[3] Sylvette Milliot, *Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume et sa famille* (Paris: Les Amis de la Musique, 2006), 2:482.
[4] Millant and Raffin, *L'Archet,* 3:141.
[5] Ibid., 471.
[6] Retford, *Bows and Bow Makers* (London: The Strad, 1964), 73.

In 1970, Étienne Vatelot (b. 1925), the world-renowned *luthier* and instrument dealer, took it upon himself to rebuild the tradition by creating a violin-making school in his birthplace of Mirecourt.[7] The school opened in 1970 and, the following year, in 1971, the school offered its first official bow-making class with a three-year curriculum under the supervision of Bernard Ouchard (1925-1979). From 1971 to 1981, the school trained nineteen bow-makers.[8] As Stéphane Tomachot (b. 1959) writes in the preface to *Les Luthiers Français*:

> Who could have foreseen at the beginning of the 1960's, when French bow-making was on the point of vanishing (no more than three or four active members), that thirty years later, fifty French bow-makers would once again radiate within the world of the instruments which form the string quartet.[9]

Due to the ever-increasing prices for older French bows, the demand for modern bows is stronger than ever. This rebirth of French bow-making artistry would not have been possible without the devotion of Étienne Vatelot and the classes at the Lycée Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume headed by Bernard Ouchard.

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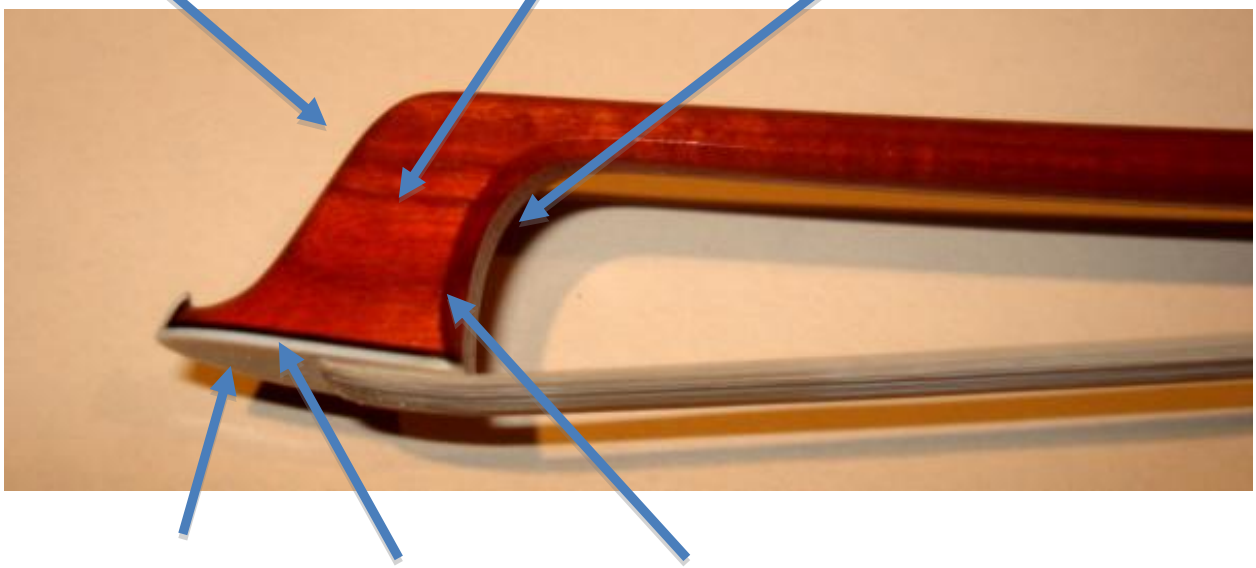
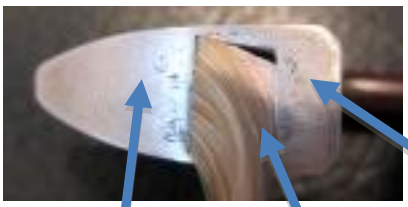
[7] He was also helped by the violin-maker, Jean Bauer.

[8] The nineteen bow makers who trained in Mirecourt were (by year of graduation): Jean-Yves Matter (b. 1953), Benoît Rolland (b. 1954), Stéphane Müller (1956), Wilfred Akoune (b. 1956), Martin Devillers (b. 1956), Gilles Duhaut (b. 1957), Sylvie Masson (b. 1957), Didier Claudel (b. 1959), Jean-Pascal Nehr (b. 1957), Christophe Schaeffer (b. 1958), Jean Grunberger (b. 1958), Pascal Lauxerois (1959-1994), Stéphane Tomachot (b. 1959), Michel Jamonneau (b. 1960), Jacques Poullot (b. 1960), Éric Grandchamps (b. 1962), Arnaud Suard (b. 1961), Georges Tepho (b. 1961), and Marielle Gobin (b. 1962).

[9] L & V Le Canu, *Les Luthiers Français, Les Archetiers Contemporains* (Paris: Caennaise, 1996), 5.

An Illustrated Glossary of Terms





The laping The band The adjuster

The ferrule The pearl eye

The screw/adjuster

The heel The pearl eye The mortice

Chapter 1

Construction of a Bow Following the Tourte Concept

The concept of the modern bow was first developed in France around 1785 by François Xavier Tourte.[1] Prior to the mid-eighteenth century, bows were considered to be an accessory to the violin and were made by carpenters. During that era, carpenters, especially those working under the auspices of the Corporation des Menuisiers-Ebenists (Woodcraft Guild), were highly respected. The eighteenth century was the golden age of French furniture-making and Nicolas Pierre Tourte, known as Tourte *père*, (c.1700-1764) was a carpenter. He did not declare himself to be a *luthier* until 1742.[2] One of the earliest recorded documents citing "Facteurs d'Archets" (bow-makers) was written by Nicolas's son, François Xavier Tourte, on June 15, 1800.[3] François Xavier was first taught bow-making by his father but subsequently was apprenticed to a clock-maker. After his father's death in 1764, François's elder brother Nicolas took over his father's business. François returned to bow-making in 1774 with the knowledge of precious metal carving that he had learned from clock-making.[4] During the period when François was working with his brother Nicolas, performers such as Jean-Baptiste Viotti (1755-1824) were expressing their unhappiness with the available bows. Viotti, originally from Italy, lived in Paris from 1782-92. During that time, he bought bows from François Tourte to go along with his Stradivarius violin. Viotti may have had great influence in advising

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[1] Robin Stowell, *The Early Violin and Viola: A Practical Guide* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 45.
[2] Millant and Raffin, *L'Archet,* 1:47.
[3] Ibid., 132.
[4] Joseph Roda, *Bows for Musical Instruments* (Chicago: W. Lewis, 1959), 287.

François Tourte on the playing capability of his bows. The result was a collaboration between the most famous violinist of his time working alongside the most gifted bow-maker in France.[5] Another important musician, composer Louis Spohr (1784-1859) played an important role in the history of the Tourte bows, for he was the first to document their superiority in his pedagogical treatise *Violinschule* (1832). According to Spohr, the Tourte bow embodied "trifling weight with sufficient elasticity of stick and the beautiful and uniform bending, by which the nearest approach to the hair is exactly in the middle between the head and the frog."[6]

Through François Tourte's experiments with woods as well as the length of stick and development of the frog, the modern bow's blueprint was born. No written documents have ever been produced by any members of the Tourte family. However, two of the twentieth century's most respected bow-makers and co-authors of the book *L'Archet*, Bernard Millant and Jean François Raffin, have written out the basic characteristics of a modern violin bow by François Xavier Tourte (made circa 1800). These are:

- The stick is round, made of pernambuco wood, measuring between 72.5 and 73.2 centimeters in length;
- The head is high and square with a head plate;
- The height of the frog is 20 to 21 millimeters and its length, 44 to 46.5 millimeters. It has a closed frog (with a slide) and the added ferrule;

[5]<http://www.glaaf.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=16&Itemid=33>

[6] Louis Spohr, *Violinschule* (London: Tobias Haslinger, 1847), 112.

- The weight of the whole bow is between 58 and 62 grams.[7]

These specifications are still in use to this day. The only addition is the underslide attributed to François Lupot II (1774-1838), which we will discuss later in this chapter.[8]

The making of bows can be divided into four parts of which the first three are equally important: the making of the stick; the making of the frog; the making of the button; and the final touches.

The making of the stick

Bow-makers have established pernambuco as the wood of choice for making bows since it has the highest ratio of strength to flexibility. Famous bow-makers have used other alternative woods such as bee-wood (in French *amourette*), ironwood and other exotic specimens yet pernambuco remains a favorite (fig. 1.1, copyright Tarisio archives).

Fig 1.1A: Bee-wood violin bow

[7] Millant and Raffin, *L'Archet,* 1:151-3.
[8] Roda, *Bows for Musical Instruments*, 208.

Fig 1.1B. Ironwood violin bow

Fig 1.1C. Pernambuco violin bow

Since some bow-makers are worried about the lack of pernambuco available and the difficulties in finding fine specimens, some are currently experimenting with carbon fiber to see if the characteristics of pernambuco can be recreated. Benoît Rolland (b. 1954), a graduate of the Mirecourt School of bow-making, was the first to pattern an adjustable carbon fiber bow in the early 1980's. The bow was virtually unbreakable and offered the possibility of adjusting the stiffness of the stick by inserting a small screwdriver where the button would normally be placed.[9] Carbon fiber bows are now easily accessible to players.

Pernambuco, also know as *caesalpina echinata*,[10] is a member of the Brazilwood family as it is only found in northern Brazil, in the Mata region. It was introduced to Europe after the colonization of Brazil by Portugal in the early sixteenth century.

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[9] Conversation with Benoît Rolland, Boston, MA, June 2007. For more information, see: <http://www.benoitrolland.com>

[10]Robin Stowell, *The Cambridge Companion to the Violin* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 26.

Originally, the wood was exported for use as a fabric red dye.[11] Since pernambuco was expensive and Baroque bows were only considered an accessory, it is possible that prior to François Tourte's experiments, the cost of purchasing such fine wood would have outweighed its needs. Unfortunately, today, pernambuco is an endangered species since so few trees are left. Bow-makers have created the International Pernambuco Conservation Initiative to try to save this rare and important wood "through research, replanting programs, educational outreach and other conservation measures."[12]

Pernambuco wood must age for 150 years before it can be used to make a bow. First, the tree will mature for at least a hundred years, then the wood will be cut and left to dry for at least ten years.[13] The wood will be sawed into blanks and bow-makers will occasionally try to carve one to determine the effect of drying, in a manner similar to that of a wine-maker who would follow the aging of the wine in his cellar. (Figure 1.2)[14]

Fig. 1.2: A number of bow blanks (copyright Tarisio archives)

[11] For more information, see: <http://www.arcosbrasil.com/ >.
[12] Cynthia Graber, "Viva Brasil," *String Magazine* 119 (May 2004): 34-45.
[13] Isabel Thomson, "Un Archetier," *The Strad* 103 (April 1992): 347.
[14] Conversation with Yannick Le Cannu, Lille, 3 January 2008.

Once a blank is ready to be crafted, it will first be cut into a 74-millimeter-long, even rectangular shape, and from there, into an octagonal shape, with eight 45-degree facets and a total diameter of three millimeters at the frog gradually thinning to two millimeters towards the tip.[15] Often, the bow will be smoothed into a round stick instead of an octagonal shape; however, the frog area always stays octagonal.

Carving the head is tricky since it involves a prolongation of the stick into a falling trapezium-like shape. The process differs strongly from one bow-maker to another and often acts as a signature for each craftsperson's work. There are no exact dimensions for the head but the height is about two to two-and-a-half millimeters with a width of one millimeter at its thinnest to two-and-a-half at its widest[16] (fig. 1.2).

Figure 1.3: Violin bow by François Xavier Tourte (copyright Tarisio archives)

At first, the head is quickly carved before cambering the stick by heating it with an alcohol lamp to create the appropriate camber. By heating the bow, oxygen evaporates from the wood, thus making it easier to shape and camber.[17] To camber the heated stick, the bow-maker creates pressure on the wood, using his hands to force it into a curved line. Cambering a bow is dangerous: the bow-maker could easily break the stick by cambering it too strongly or finding out that the wood has imperfections. According to Benoît Rolland,

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[15] Stowell, *The Cambridge Companion to the Violin*, 29.
[16] William Redford, *Bows and Bow Makers* (London: The Strad, 1964), 44-45.
[17] Stowell, *The Cambridge Companion to the Violin*, 26.

> Bending over a flame, the bow is heated inch by inch, then put over the edge of the workbench and bent by the pressure of his hands. This is how a perfect, even and smooth curve is created. Up to this moment a lot of work has already been put into the work piece. Sometimes the valuable wood is very sensitive and the heated stick splinters like glass. Once the wood has passed the procedure of bending it is very unlikely that the bow will ever break.[18]

To the crudely designed head is now added a bottom ebony plate covered by an ivory or plastic cover glued to the head of the stick and forming the head plate. For the glue to hold, the ebony and plastic are held with a string around the stick until the glue dries.

The head mortice is now carved. The mortice is a small empty space where the hair will be held below the head of the bow.[19] This space is carefully cut since it will need to hold the hair without any glue or nails but with the simple addition of a small wedge on top. To secure the bottom of the head, a head-plate is added. Since ivory plates are now banned, as a direct result of the 1989 United Nations nine-year moratorium on ivory, they are made from plastic (fig. 1.4).[20]

Figure 1.4: A broken violin bow's head with a separated head-plate,
(copyright Tarisio archives)

[18] Benoît Rolland, *Der Bogen vereint Bewegung und Klang* (Berlin: Anne-Sophie Mutter Foundation, July 2005), 1-3.
[19] Roda, *Bows for Musical Instruments*, 92.
[20] Dominic Gill, *Le Violon* (Luynes:Van de Velde, 1984), 49.

Should the bow-maker choose to create a round stick instead of an octagonal bow, s/he will now smooth the eight 45-degree facets into a round shape. According to Bernard Millant and Jean-François Raffin, the sticks were finished in either an octagonal or round shape depending on the time in history. From 1750 until 1800, French bows were generally round, but, between 1800 and 1820-30, they became octagonal. The shape returned to round from 1830 to 1900 (although some octagonal sticks reappear around 1870), and from 1900 to 1960, one-third were octagonal and the rest round.[21]

When the stick is ready, a small rectangular two-millimeter trench, known as a stick mortice is carved in the place where the frog will lie and a hole is drilled at the far back and center of the stick through the height of the mortice. This mechanism will allow the frog to sit in the mortice and the button's screw to enter the stick through the nipple in order to tighten or loosen the hair of the bow (fig. 1.5).[22]

Figure 1.5: Violin bow stick by J.F. Raffin (copyright Filimonov collection)

Once the stick is ready, it will need to be varnished. The French Mirecourt traditional varnish is based on a gum made of lack (from the French *laque*, from which comes the English word "lacquer"). The gum is made of light and/or dark flakes bought

[21] Millant and Raffin, *L'Archet,* 1:17.
[22] Ibid., 28.

by the pound. The varnish is made by a simply process of mixing 250 grams of gum lack with one liter of alcohol.[23] By putting friction on the stick, essentially rubbing the lack into the wood of the stick, the friction creates the varnish. The bow-makers will cook those flakes with alcohol in order to melt them and create a varnish. The process is simple since the varnish of a bow does not enhance the sound quality, unlike that of a violin's varnish.[24]

The making of the frog

Most frogs are made from a combination of ebony and silver although some may be created from ivory. Should the bow become a commercial stick for students, nickel may be substituted for silver, lowering the value of the bow. On the other hand, should the stick be of exceptional beauty, the silver might be upgraded to gold and the ebony to tortoise shell. When comparing two bows by the same maker, the one with a gold/tortoise shell mount will cost at least twice that of a silver/ebony mount due to its beauty and rarity.

The ebony begins as a black block of wood that will be hand-carved on the outside and hollowed inside to allow for the hair to be attached. The frog and liner, which will go against the stick, will be three-sided to fit the octagonal-shaped stick. Since Tourte, the frog has been built in the same manner except for the addition of a thin metal liner placed between the stick and the frog to prevent the frog from damage caused by its friction against the stick. The thin liner will either be nailed or screwed to the frog.[25]

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[23] Benoît Rolland, interview with the author, July 2010.
[24] Jean Grunberger, interview with the author, July 2010.
[25] Ibid., 27.

The match between the frog, liner, and bow will be adjusted to minimize any wrong movements of the frog from left to right. Through the center of the top of the frog, the bow-maker will drill a one-centimeter hole to fit the eye-screw into which the button's screw will be inserted (fig. 1.6).[26]

Figure 1.6: Frog's eye-screw (0.2 inches) with two-nailed pin holding the liner (private collection)

In order to attach the hair inside the frog, the bottom is hollowed by about two millimeters and a small hole is built below that of the eye-screw. The beginning of the horsehair will be placed in the small chamber below the eye-screw and held by a small removable wedge. Before François Xavier Tourte, the process would have stopped there, but following the modern bow concept, once attached, the hair will be held against the stick by a ferrule, (a half-moon shaped metal part) and hidden in the inside of the frog by

[26] Roda, *Bows for Musical Instruments*, 63.

a pearl slide. Both the ferrule and slide are movable when re-hairing the bow. (Fig. 1.7 A, B, C).[27]

1.7A: Violin bow with no ferrule or pearl slide (private collection)

1.7B-C: Violin bow's frog with ferrule and pearl slide (private collection)

[27] Werner Bachman and David Boyden, *The Violin Family* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1989), 208-9.

The four sides of the frog also require work. The front side of the frog is curved in a flat U shape to allow the placement of the thumb when playing and the back will require a back plate, once again, for reinforcement. On the long sides of the frog, the ebony is carved to follow the comfort of the fingers. Some bow-makers may add a pearl eye (fig. 1.8A), sometimes with a silver or gold circle engraved around it (often referred to as a Parisian eye) (fig. 1.8 B), while others will leave it plain (fig. 1.8 C).

Figure 1.8A: A violin frog with a pearl eye (private collection)

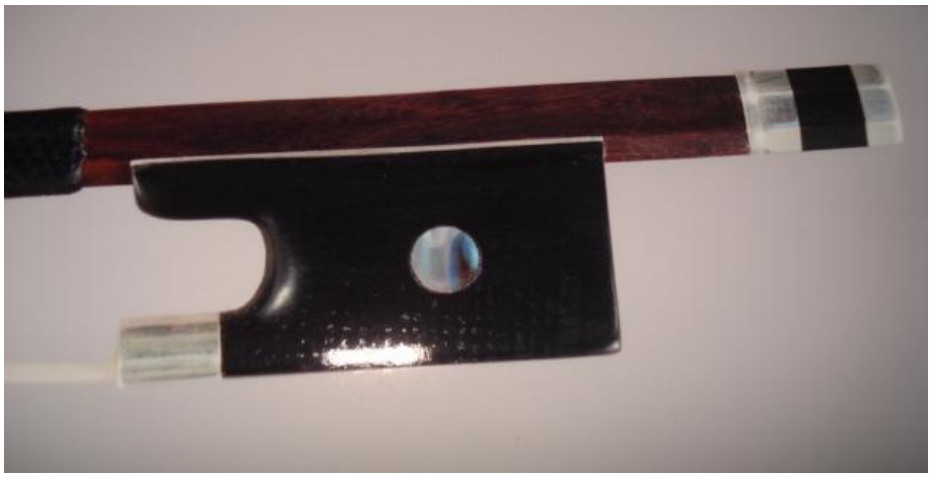
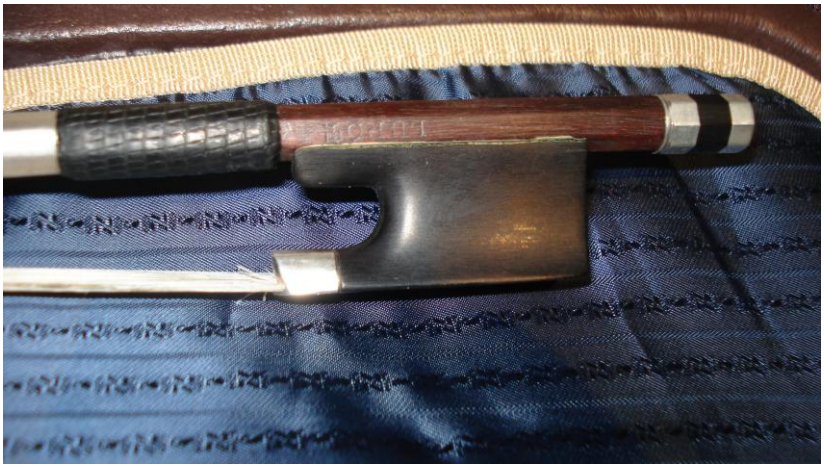


Figure 1.8B: A violin frog with a Parisian eye (private collection)

Figure 1.8C: A plain violin frog (private collection)



According to modern bow-makers, the making of a bow from beginning to end will require about two to three weeks of work and can only be accomplished by a single maker in order to be regarded as a bow by that maker.[28] Should bow-makers work together, the bow will be regarded as ”collaboration” between those makers.

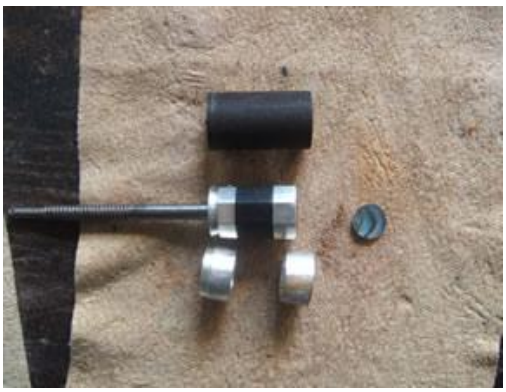
[28] Conversation with Yannick Le Cannu, Lille, 3 January 2008.

The making of the adjuster

In order to tighten or untie the bow's hair, a screw-like adjuster is placed through the nipple. The adjuster is generally made out of metal, matching that of the frog's metal parts (although some early bows had wood, horn or ivory adjusters). The adjuster, also known as a button, can be made of a single metal cap held by one or two pins (example A) or as a three-piece adjuster made of metal with ebony and metal (example B) also held by pins (fig. 1.9).[1]

Figure 1.9 A: Adjuster with a single cap (private collection)

Figure 1.9 B: Adjuster with three pieces (private collection)



Unless the adjuster is made of a single metal cap, it is generally ornamented by a circular piece of mother of pearl placed at the tip of the adjuster to match that of the side of the frog (fig. 1.10).

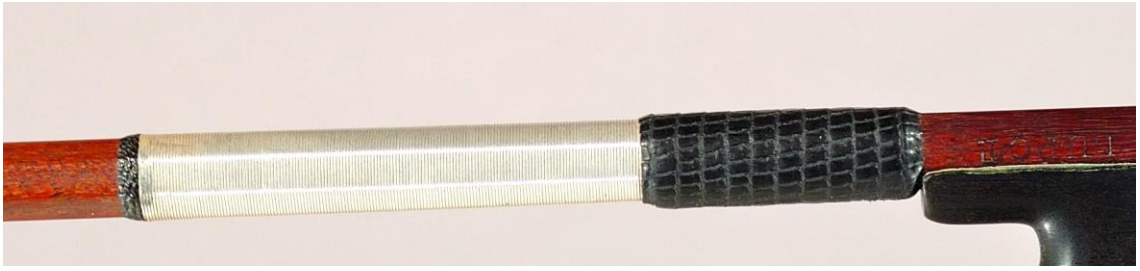
[1] Étienne Vatelot, *Les Archets Français*, 2 vols. (Nancy: Dufour, 1977), 1:31.

Figure 1.10: Two adjusters, one plain gold and one gold with a pearl eye and pearl sides (private collection)

The final touches

In order to protect the stick from the constant pressure exerted by the index finger, a "lapping" is added on the stick where the index lands as well as a "band" around the thumb area.[2] The band is made of leather but the lapping can be metal, fabric or whalebone (fig. 1.11). The bow will require horsehair and rosin in order to create sound.

Figure 1.11: Metal lapping and band on a bow (private collection)



[2] Ibid.

A bow will be said to be "original" to a single maker as long as the stick, frog, and adjuster come from the same hand. All the other parts, especially the bow's hair, are routinely changed. According to Henry Saint George:

> The process of re-hairing is now identical with that of hairing a new bow in the first instance . . . At one end it is tied securely with waxed silk or thread, and the short ends are cut off to within about a sixteenth of an inch from the thread . . . This knot is laid in the trench of the head, and the plug pressed firmly into position. . . . The hair, of course, must be brought over the wedge in an even ribbon. . . The nut is now placed in position with the screw-eye rather above the centre of the slot in which it travels, then a careful estimate is made of the length of hair required to go just far enough round the plug to be secure, and a knot exactly like the one described for the head is made at the point decided on. . . When this lower knot is made the ferrule is slipped over the hair, the knot is laid in the trench and the plug put in as before. [3]

Although the making of a bow follows the clear pattern as established by Tourte, each one will be slightly different. These differences may be a result of the pernambuco wood used since all blanks are different. The differences in wood can easily be seen in the color of the finished bow. Some sticks will appear dark in color while others are light as a result of the differences in grain of each individual pernambuco wood (fig. 1.12 and 1.13).

[3] Henry Saint George, *The Bow, Its History, Manufacture and Use* (London: Horace Marshall & Son, 1922), 69.

Figure 1.12: A dark colored pernambuco cello bow by François Xavier Tourte (copyright Tarisio archives)

Figure 1.13: A light colored pernambuco cello bow by François Xavier Tourte (copyright Tarisio archives)

Meanwhile, the strongest difference in the master bow-makers of the early nineteenth century will come from their bowmaking characteristics. Chapter 2 will demonstrate and characterize the work of these master bow-makers and their influences.

Chapter 2

A Brief History of Nineteenth-Century Bow-Makers in France

Although the history of the modern bow has not yet been written, it has been passed on through the oral tradition from one bow-maker to another. Only three major publications listing French bow-makers from the days of Tourte to the twenty-first century makers exist. The first book, Joseph Roda's *Bows for Musical Instruments*, was published in 1959.[1] This single volume is written in two parts: the first part explains the construction of the bow and the second part lists, in a dictionary-like manner, all French bow-makers from Tourte to makers from the 1950s. The next publication, Étienne Vatelot's *Les Archets Français*, dates from 1977.[2] In his two-volume work, Vatelot lists, in alphabetical order, every French bow-maker from Tourte to makers from the 1970s, briefly describing each one's life and work. The most recent book was written in the year 2000 by co-authors Jean-François Raffin and Bernard Millant. Titled *L'Archet*, the work offers a chronological listing of all French bow-makers from Tourte to those living at the time of publication.[3] By far the largest study on bow-makers ever published, *L'Archet* starts with a brief history of bow-making and follows through three volumes of listings with pictures and description of each bow-maker.

By cross-referencing the three major dictionaries of known French bow-makers, it is possible to conclude that all French bow-makers were influenced by, or were followers of, a handful of master bow-makers from the nineteenth-century. These early nineteenth-

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[1] Joseph Roda, *Bows for Musical Instruments* (Chicago: W. Lewis, 1959).
[2] Étienne Vatelot, *Les Archets Français*, 2 vols. (Nancy: Dufour, 1977).
[3] Bernard Millant and Jean-François Raffin, *L'Archet*, 3 vols. (Paris: L'Archet, 2000).

century masters created what are known as the schools of Tourte, Lupot, Pajeot/Maire, Peccatte, Voirin/Vuillaume and Bazin. These schools laid the groundwork for the late-nineteenth and twentieth-century master bow-makers such as Vigneron, Morizot, Fétique, Sartory and Ouchard.

The Tourte School

The evolution of the violin took place progressively from 1500 to 1800. Around 1760, violin-makers began the transition from the Baroque-era violin construction that resulted in the current modern construction. During that period, violin-makers changed the angle of the neck and the length of the fingerboard; they thickened the bass bar and sound post and created a higher bridge.[4] By 1830, the transition was completed: since that date, no major developments have been implemented to the construction of the violin since then. According to Robin Stowell, the improvements from the Baroque to modern standards of construction were implemented in order to allow the violin to sound more brilliant and powerful. These changes offered violinists greater agility on the instrument and the new neck settings were probably introduced by French makers and referred to as the "Paris fashion."[5]

Parallel with the violin's transition, the bow underwent a similar process, as the Tourte brothers amalgamated the different styles of bows made during the transitional era into one modern format. François Xavier Tourte made the earliest bows, according to his newly-developed principles, in around 1785.[6] Some of Tourte's most significant changes

[4] Stowell, *The Early Violin and Viola: A Practical Guide*, 33.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Millant and Raffin, *L'Archet,* 2:158.

were the height of the head, the length of the stick, and his creation of the bow's ferrule.[7] These inventions allowed violin players, for the first time, to produce a stronger tone and smooth bow changes.[8]

The collaboration between Tourte and the famous violinists of the later part of the eighteenth century is well documented. François Joseph Fétis writes:

> Having arrived in Paris in 1782, Viotti asked several luthiers to try various modifications in order to improve the bow . . . these modifications were carried out by Tourte, an uneducated workman gifted basically with patience, a spirit of observation, a good eye and a skillful hand.[9]

Furthermore, the violin had become a very important instrument of the time. Gabriel Banat writes:

> By the middle of the eighteenth century, the violin had become so popular that Parisians considered it the most perfect of all the instruments. Audiences followed with ever-increasing interest the succession of violin virtuoso . . . Jean-Baptiste Lully and Jean-Baptiste Viotti, both of Italian origin, represented the cornerstone of French violin playing.[10]

The Tourte School bows can be divided into two characteristic models: the Baroque-influenced model referred to as the *col de cygne* (swan's head) (fig. 2.1) and the more contemporary square-head model (fig. 2.2).

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[7] Ibid., 131. A ferrule can be used in many different ways since it is a metal object (sometimes plastic) used for joining or reinforcing one part to another. Yet Tourte was the first one to use this already-existing contraption for the bow.
[8] Stowell, *The Early Violin and Viola: A Practical Guide*, 46.
[9] François Joseph Fétis, *Antoine Stradivari, Luthier Célèbre*, trans. John Bishop (London: William Reeves, 1864), 113-24.
[10] Gabriel Banat, "Le Chevalier de Saint-Georges, Man of Music and Gentleman-at-Arms: The Life and Times of an Eighteenth-Century Prodigy," *Black Music Research Journal* 10 /2 (Autumn 1990): 177.

Figure 2.1: Violin bow by Nicolas Léonard Tourte (copyright Tarisio archives)

Figure 2.2: Violin bow by François Xavier Tourte (copyright Tarisio archives)

The incorporation of the *col de cygne* was clearly a continuation of the Baroque bow (fig. 2.3) while the other shows the aptitude of modern bow-making.

Figure 2.3: An 18th-Century Baroque violin bow (copyright Tarisio archives)

Bow-makers such as Prosper Colas (1842-1918), the Bazin family, and many others have based some of their models on Tourte's *col de cygne* and signed their bows TOURTE (fig. 2.4).

Figure 2.4: Violin bow made by Charles Nicolas Bazin, branded "Tourte" (copyright Tarisio archives)

The "modern" Tourte model (after 1800) has all the elements of a twentieth-century bow except for the underslide, which alleviates the friction of the ebony against the pernambuco stick.[11] The head, frog and button can all be carved in the manner of François Xavier Tourte to create a Tourte school bow. The *col de cygne*, or the dimensions of its key elements, can serve to identify Tourte models. According to William Retford (1875-1970), who was a British bow-maker who worked for the Hill brothers in London, some of the characteristics are the angle of the chamfer (both outer corners linking the throat to the cheek of the head of the stick) in relationship to the head and the finish at the point of the octagonal stick. Retford also points out a gold and tortoise shell frog and button as well as the triangular (Masonic) pin formation used on some frogs.[12]

The Lupot School

François Lupot (1747-1835) is credited with the invention of the underslide. According to Millant, the Tourte School influenced Lupot in his earlier models.[13] The characteristics of Lupot's mature models have a round stick with a well-carved head and

[11] Ibid., 288
[12] William C. Retford, *Bows and Bow Makers* (London: The Strad, 1964), 44-50.
[13] Millant and Raffin, *L'Archet,* 2:288.

chamfers, both rounder than the Tourte model, with chamfers cut from the top of the stick at a right angle (fig. 2.5A).[14] The frogs, with underslide, are very elegant and often plain without a mother of pearl eye[15] (also see in fig. 2.5A).

Figure 2.5A: Cello bow by François Lupot without an underslide
(copyright Tarisio archives)

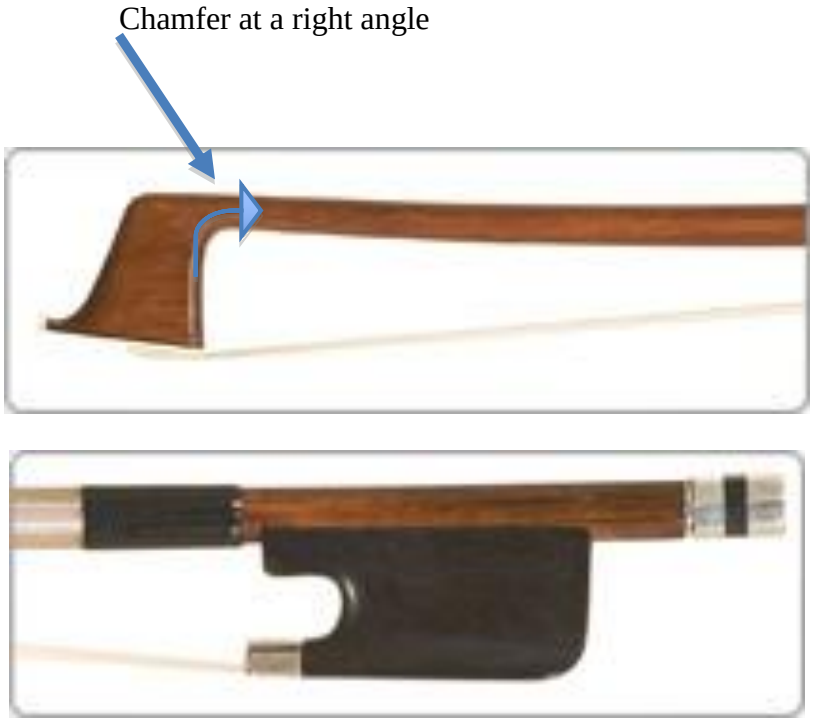


Figure 2.5B: bow by François Lupot with an underslide (private collection)

[14] Vatelot, *Les Archets Français*, 1:574.
[15] Roda, *Bows for Musical Instruments*, 208.

The Pajeot/Maire School

Nicolas Rémy Maire (1800-1878) and Étienne Pajeot [or Pageot] (1791-1849) were both born in Mirecourt and reputedly worked for the bow-maker, Jacques Lafleur (1757-1832).[16] This may explain the strong resemblance between the works of the three bow-makers. The characteristics of the bows from the Pajeot/Maire School are found mostly in the width and height of the head as well as in the unusually long and low setting of the frog[17] (fig. 2.6 A and B).[18]

Figure 2.6A: violin bow by Nicolas Rémy Maire (copyright Tarisio archives)

[16] Roda, *Bows for Musical Instruments*, 212.
[17] Ibid.
[18] It is now believed that Pajeot may have trained with Maire. However, the conjecture is complicated by the fact that only the early Maire bows resemble those of Pajeot.

Figure 2.6B: violin bow by Étienne Pajeot (copyright Tarisio archives)

The Peccatte School

Dominique Peccatte (1810-1874) was born in Mirecourt and later moved to Paris to work for Vuillaume. At the Vuillaume shop, it was Jean-Marie Persoit (1782-1854) who helped him develop his style.[19] Dominique Peccatte clearly appreciated other bow-makers as he created "Tourte Model" Peccatte bows (although very scarce) and also signed his bows after Lupot upon purchasing Lupot's shop in 1837[20] (fig. 2.7). But it is the Peccatte head model that has influenced all who worked with him as well as makers of the present-day bows.[21] The main characteristic of the head is its unconventional square shape as seen in figure 2.8: the head is high, square and strong looking, and the

[19] Paul Childs, *Jean-Marie Persoit: his Life and Work* (Montrose, NY: Magic Bow), 35.
[20] Childs, *The Bowmakers of the Peccatte Family,* 45.
[21] Vatelot, *Les Archets Français,* 1:738.

chamfers are cut with authority.[22] The combination of the square head, a possible perfection of the pre-Tourte hatchet-head/Cramer model (fig. 2.9), with a slightly shorter stick, creates a stronger playing bow.[23]

Figure 2.7: A violin bow by Dominique Peccatte, signed Lupot (private collection)

Figure 2.8: Violin bow by Dominique Peccatte (copyright Tarisio archives)

[22] Childs, *The Bowmakers of the Peccatte Family*, 45.
[23] Ibid., 49.

Figure 2.9: Violin bow by Jean-Jacques Meauchand, with a Cramer head, mounted in ivory (c. 1775) (copyright Tarisio archives)

The Voirin/Vuillaume School

It is impossible to speak of French bows without mentioning the violin-maker, dealer and collector, Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume (1798-1854). He is associated with purchasing Italian instruments notably from Luigi Tarisio (1796-1854) who had a fine collection of Italian violins. After Tarisio passed away, Vuillaume then acquired his entire collection, which contained 24 Stradivari instruments (including the celebrated "Messiah" Stradivarius) and 120 other violins of Italian origin.[24] Vuillaume was a businessman and understood the need for fine bows. Following the employment of both

[24] Milliot, *Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume et sa famille*, 1:74.

Jean Pierre Marie Persoit and Dominique Peccatte, he hired many bowmakers to work for him.[25] Thanks to these bow-makers, Vuillaume was always able to sell bows to go with his violins.

Table 1: Bow-makers employed by Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume

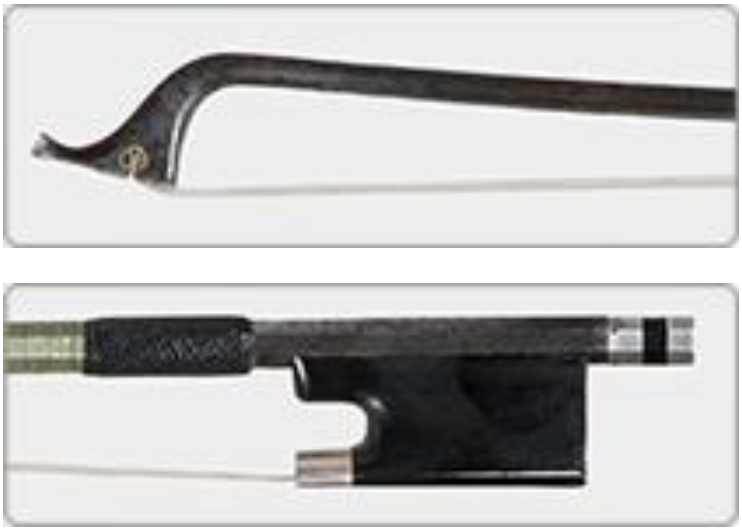
Name of bow-maker	Birth/death dates	Dates in Vuillaume's employ
Jean Pierre Marie Persoit	1782?-1854?	1821?-1843?
Dominique Peccatte	1810-1874	1826-1837
Claude Joseph Fonclause	1799-1862	1830-1840
Nicolas Maline	1822-1877	1840--?
Pierre Simon	1808-1881	1840-1844
Jean Grand-Adam	1823-1869	1842-1853
Joseph Henry	1797-1878	1847-?
François Peccatte	1821-1855	1852
François Nicolas Voirin	1833-1885	1855-1870
Jean Joseph Martin	1837-1910	1858-1863
Nicolas Maire	1800-1878	Circa 1860
Charles Peccatte	1850-1910	1866-1890
Charles Claude Husson	1847-1915	1870-1874
Justin Poirson	1851-1925	1870-1874
Prosper Colas	1842-1919	1873-1874

[25] Millant and Raffin, *L'Archet,* 2:66.

An inventor himself, Vuillaume invented a hollow steel bow (fig. 2.10) in 1834 and received a patent for his "self-rehairing and fixed frog" bows in 1836[26] (fig. 2.11). Vuillaume is also responsible for creating a frog with a round bottom slide and ferrule[27] (fig. 2.11) and "picture bows"[28] (fig. 2.12A and 2,12B).

François Nicolas Voirin was Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume's cousin and his primary, highest-paid bow-maker.[29] Voirin's bows are known for their elegant design, light weight, with narrow heads (as seen in fig. 2.11).[30]

Figure 2.10: A Vuillaume metal stick with self-rehairing frog and button (copyright Tarisio archives)



[26] Milliot, *Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume*, 1:484.
[27] Vatelot, *Les Archets Français*, 1:998.
[28] A picture bow has a lens inside the center of the eye of the frog, through which one can see a picture. Most of the time, it is a picture of J. B. Vuillaume.
[29] Millant and Raffin, *L'Archet,* 2:63.
[30] Roda, *Bows for Musical Instruments*, 303.

Figure 2.11: Violin bow by François Nicolas Voirin with a round bottom slide and ferrule (copyright Tarisio archives)

Figure 2.12A: “Picture bow” by François Nicolas Voirin (copyright Tarisio archives)

Figure 2.12B: View of Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume inside the lens of a "Picture bow" by François Nicolas Voirin (copyright Tarisio archives)

After Vuillaume, the next large workshop was established by the Bazin family, starting with Charles Nicolas Bazin (1847-1915), who began to make bows around 1870. At its peak, between 1901 and 1906, the Bazin workshop had twelve to seventeen bow-makers creating two thousand to three thousand bows per year.[31] Voirin influenced the Bazin head model in that the head contains elements of the thin, high, elegant style of Voirin, but the shape is more bell-like. The frogs were classic-shaped or followed the round Vuillaume format.[32] The Bazin workshop also made fine bows influenced by other makers such as Tourte, Voirin, Lupot, and labelled them according to their styles. The Bazin School followed the Voirin concept, initiated during the 1860s, of moving away from the square head of Peccatte to the rounder Voirin models (fig. 2.13).[33]

[31] Millant and Raffin, *L'Archet,* 3:474.
[32] Vatelot, *Les Archets Français*, 1:90.
[33] Ibid., 473.

Figure 2.13 Charles Nicolas Bazin violin bow (copyright Tarisio archives)

Although great makers such as Louis Joseph Morizot (1874-1957) or Émile August Ouchard (1900-1969) occasionally built a bow on the Peccatte model bow, the Voirin approach was more common after the Vuillaume/Voirin era and bow-makers practically abandoned the Peccatte style. Bernard Millant and Jean-François Raffin write:

> "The lightness of some Voirin's bows may be regretted, but this clearly corresponded to the taste of the musicians of the time rather than to his own personal preference."[34]

It was necessary to wait until Jean Jacques Millant (1928-1998) to reinstate fully the Peccatte square head concept as seen through Millant's bows. The Peccatte and the Voirin models served as a source of inspiration for bow-makers throughout the twentieth-Century. It can be exemplified through the work of Bernard Ouchard (1925-1979) and his students at the Mirecourt School in France.

[34] Millant and Raffin, *L'Archet,* 2:363.

Chapter 3

A History of Bow-Making in Mirecourt, France

Mirecourt is a city located in the Vosges department, approximately 230 miles east of Paris, France. According to the web site of the Conseil Général des Vosges, instrument-making started in Mirecourt during the sixteenth century.[1] The tradition of violin-making in Mirecourt began with the Dukes of Lorraine, who ruled the Lorraine region from 855 until 1729. Following their travels to Italy during the sixteenth century, they brought Italian violin-makers to Mirecourt and by 1635, forty-three *luthiers* were making instruments.[2] Towards the close of the eighteenth century, following the French Revolution, the Duchy changed from a sovereign state with a hereditary dynasty to a civil department under the control of the French government.

The earliest record of a "dancing master" violinist in Mirecourt was noted by Jean Marot in 1678. From about 1740, records of Mirecourt violins being sold were written. The earliest tax register to record the presence of a Mirecourt bow-maker dates back to 1756. These early Baroque bow-makers were Nicolas Guinot, Grances Herlot, and Jean Piat.[3] This shows that from the mid-eighteenth century, the arts of making violins and bows were considered separate and bow-making had become a career of its own.

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[1] For more information, see: <http://www.cg88.fr/cg88/frontoffice/document.asp?num=84&lan=1>.
[2] Albert Jacquot, *La lutherie lorraine et française* (Paris: Librairie Fischbacher, 1912), 5.
[3] Millant and Raffin, *L'Archet,* 1:33.

From 1740 until 1935, nearly all important French bow-makers had their roots in Mirecourt.[4] Most were born in that city or came there during their teens to study the art of bow-making. Their lives were generally spent entirely in Mirecourt, although the most celebrated makers often moved to Paris. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it was common for the Parisian *luthiers* to order bows from the Mirecourt bow-makers.[5] But this relationship started much earlier. In an article in *The Strad* magazine, bow-maker Benoît Rolland addresses the relationship between Paris and Mirecourt makers.

> Why have the greatest makers always moved to Paris? The effect of the guilds cannot be ignored: until their abolition in 1791 under the Revolutionary government, they imposed very high fees on apprentices. In Paris, few bow-makers could afford these fees, but more lenient terms applied in the Duchy of Lorraine. Could this be why Mirecourt offered only its best talents a chance to work in the mother city, a place of high education and unmatched musical dynamism? In return, and following Tourte's fame, the knowledge and skills that emerged in Paris were brought to Mirecourt and standardized the principles of bow-making across the country.[6]

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the bow underwent some small changes, but the Tourte style was clearly accepted by all and few tried to improve upon the already acclaimed bow. Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume ordered many bows from Mirecourt but also, as a shrewd businessman, he lured the top bow-makers away from Mirecourt and hired them to work in his Paris workshop. These bows are stamped "VUILLAUME A PARIS", regardless of which maker made them. The Vuillaume workshop would have

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[4] According to data about one hundred and eleven of the most recognized French bow makers born between 1740 until 1947 and cited in Millant and Raffin's *L'Archet,* it is clear that eighty-seven of them were either born or studied in Mirecourt, eighteen were from Paris, and six were from outside Paris and Mirecourt.

[5] For more information, see Sidney Boyer's *Gand-Pajeot* (New York: BAS Printer, 2000). The book offers an interesting interpretation of Charles François Gand's ordering of bows from Étienne Pajeot, probably asking him to create fake Tourte bows.

[6] Benoît Rolland "Bow Heirs," *Strad Magazine* 114 (April 2003): 33.

been a good place for a Mirecourt-trained maker to test his skills prior to opening a shop under his own name. This scenario proved to be true for nearly all of Vuillaume's bow-makers.[7]

Through the initiative of Charles Buthod (1810-1889), a student of Vuillaume, Mirecourt became a center for the creation of mass fabrication of string instruments. Upon his return from Paris to Mirecourt in 1834, Buthod created the first factory of instruments. By 1836, he was employing forty instrument-makers and producing 850 instruments per year. In 1848, Nicolas Duchène (1803-1859) and Charles Husson (1823-1872) bought the Buthod factory and create the Husson-Buthod Shop. In 1857, Jérome Thibouville (1833-1902) joined Huson-Buthod, changing the name of the business to Husson-Buthod-Thibouville and together in that same year, they opened a second location in Paris.

In 1861, Jérome Thibouville married Buthod's niece, Mary Lamy. Together, they created a new version of the Husson-Buthod-Thibouville entreprise called the Jérome-Thibouville-Lamy (JTL) Factory; they published their first catalog in 1867. By 1872, JTL employed 240 workers between the Paris shop and the Mirecourt factory.[8] By 1893, in addition to the two locations in France, JTL also took on new business partners and sales representatives in New York and in London. Unfortunately, as a result of the poor quality

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[7] According to Millant and Raffin's *L'Archet* and Roger Millant's *J.B. Vuillaume, sa vie, son oeuvre* (London: Hill and Sons, 1972), one can build a list of French bow makers who worked for the Vuillaume shop (in chronological order): 1825, Jean Pierre Marie Persoit; 1826, Dominique Peccatte; 1830, Claude-Joseph Fonclause; 1840, Nicolas Maline; 1840, Clément Eulry; 1842, Jean Grand-Adam; 1847, Joseph Henry; 1847, Pierre Simon; 1852, François Peccatte; 1860, Nicolas Maire; 1865, François Nicolas Voirin; 1866, Charles Peccatte; 1868, Jean Joseph Martin; 1870, Charles Claude Husson; 1870, Justin Poirson; 1873, Prosper Colas.

[8] <http://www.luthiers-mirecourt.com>

of his mass-construction JTL instruments, business started shrinking and Thibouville had to cut down his number of employees. By 1921, he only had sixty-eight instrument-makers working for him. In 1924, following a large fire and competition from other shops, JTL claimed bankruptcy.[9] Evely Bonetat, the president of *les Amis du vieux Mirecourt-Regain* (Friends of the old Mirecourt-Regain) remarks:

> We must admit to a hard truth concerning both bow and instrument-making. While skilled crafting carried on, mass production (Jérome Thibouville, Laberte) was to tarnish Mirecourt's reputation. Yet if Mirecourt's production had become so mediocre, why did the "great" Parisians stand first in line to buy from Mirecourt? [10]

The unfortunate quality problems in Mirecourt's violin-making and bow-making resulted in a decline in demands from musicians. In 1912, JTL claimed in his catalog to be single-handedly employing one thousand workers.[11] By the 1950s, counting JTL's employees and all the other smaller workshops in Mirecourt, only a hundred workers were still making instruments.[12]

Bernard Ouchard and the École nationale de lutherie

L'École nationale de lutherie (The National School of String Instrument-Making) opened its doors in 1970 at the Lycée Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume with the goal of reviving the French string instrument-making industry. Not until 1971 was the decision made to offer a bow-making class. Although no open interviews were ever called, the Parisian *luthier* and founding father of the School, Marcel Vatelot, was in charge of appointing the

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[9] Tierier Roland, conférence des luthiers français et allemand à Colmar "Les Marques de Fabriques," Volmar, France, June 1992.
[10] Millant and Raffin, *L'Archet,* 1:34.
[11] Jérome Thibouville-Lamy's catalog 1912. For more information see < http://www.luthiers-mirecourt.com/thibouville1912.htm>
[12] For more information see: <http://www.luthiers-mirecourt.com/index.htm>

bow-making instructor. Only a handful of candidates had the professional reputation to head this department; furthermore, only ten French bow-makers were born between 1910 and 1950.[13] There are no documents listing Vatelot's short-list for candidates for this position, but it is fair to assume that it had to be one of the eight French bow-makers still alive by 1971.

Jacques Audinot (1922-1992) was one of these eight French bow-makers. He did not come from Mirecourt but might have been eligible for the post because of the important role that he played in the revival of the French School of bow-making.[14] Audinot's bows were highly inspired by the Peccatte model (see chapter 2).[15] This can be seen in figure 3.1: the head is square and strong, the frog looks robust with a Parisian eye (a metal circle around the mother-of-peal eye). Audinot generally signed his bows J. AUDINOT à PARIS.

Figure 3.1 Viola bow by Jacques Audinot (copyright Tarisio archives)

[13] Jean Grunberger, interview with author, July 2010.
[14] Millant and Raffin, *L'Archet,* 3:456.
[15] Ibid.

Roger François Lotte (1922-1989) was one of the original faculty members ay the Mirecourt School. He is credited with having taught two of Mirecourt's most recent graduates: Georges Tepho (b.1961) and Marielle Gobin (b.1962).[16] Lotte's mother was Marguerite Ouchard, the daughter of Émile Auguste Ouchard, and his father, François Lotte, was also a bow-maker. Roger Lotte's bow-making was originally similar to that of his father, but by 1960 his bows had become bulkier. His bows were often made very quickly and, therefore, not regarded as fine bow examples. They are characterized as having heavy looking heads and angular frogs.[17] (fig. 3.2)

Figure 3.2: Violin bow by Roger François Lotte (copyright Tarisio archives)

Jean Paul Lauxerois (1928-1993) was a fine bow-maker who worked in the Vatelot workshop until 1960. That same year, he resigned and stopped making bows for a period of twenty years.[18] In 1970, he could never have been considered as a possible

[16] L & V Le Canu, *Les Luthiers Français, Les Archetiers Contemporains* (Caen: L & V Le Canu, 1996), 70.
[17] Millant and Raffin, *L'Archet,* 3:466.
[18] Millant and Raffin, *L'Archet,* 3:488.

candidate for the Mirecourt School since he had became a recording producer. His bows (figure 3.3) are characterized by a large curve in the throat and a long frog, often higher at the front than the back.[19]

Figure 3.3: Bow by Jean Paul Lauxerois (copyright Tarisio archives)

Jean-Jacques Millant (1928-1998) was known during his lifetime as "un des meilleurs ouvriers de France*"* (one of the best craftsmen in France). This distinction was given to him in 1970, by the French government, as recognition for excellence in craftsmanship.[20] His career was prestigious and his bows were in great demand. It would have been unlikely for him to give up his famous shop in Paris to return to Mirecourt and teach students.[21] His style is strongly inspired by Peccatte; as can be seen in figure 3.4A: the head is strong and square, similar to Peccatte and the frogs are sometimes carved in unusual shapes (fig. 3.4B).[22]

[19] Ibids.
[20] <http://www.meilleursouvriersdefrance.info/>
[21] From a conversation with Jean François Raffin at his shop. Paris, January 2008.
[22] Millant and Raffin, *L'Archet,* 2:634.

Figure 3.4A: Bow by Jean-Jacques Millant (copyright Tarisio archives)

Figure 3.4B: Bow by Jean-Jacques Millant (copyright Tarisio archives)

Bernard Millant (b.1929) was Jean-Jacques Millant's first cousin and possibly the world's living authority on bows. By 1969, Bernard Millant had already become a very successful bow-maker and restorer and started employing assistants. Among them, from 1972-89, was Jean-François Raffin. As was the case with his cousin Jean-Jacques, demands for Bernard Millant's bows and expertise made the possibility of a move to Mirecourt impractical. During the late 1960s into the 1970s, Bernard Millant made as many as four to five bows per month. His bow-making style was highly influenced by the Peccatte school (fig. 3.5).[23]

Figure 3.5: Cello bow by Bernard Millant (copyright Tarisio archives)

[23] Millant and Raffin, *L'Archet,* 3:509.

Jean-Claude Ouchard (b.1935), Bernard Ouchard's younger brother, traveled through many countries, working as a bow-maker in France, the United States, and the Netherlands. His personal production of bows was not very extensive and in 1966, after his marriage, he lived in the Netherlands, working for the *luthier* Max Möller. Ouchard returned to Mirecourt in 1978 to open his own shop. Jean-Claude Ouchard's bows follow the style of his father E. A. Ouchard (fig. 3.6).[24]

Figure 3.6: Bow by Jean Claude Ouchard (copyright Tarisio archives)

Jean-François Raffin (b.1947) was only twenty-four years old at the time the bow-making classes opened in Mirecourt. In 1971, he became a trainee violin-maker, first with Étienne Vatelot (b.1925) and subsequently, from 1972 until 1989, with Bernard Millant.

[24] Vatelot, *Les Archets Français*, 2:694.

During his years with Bernard Millant, he also learned about bow-making.[25] His bows are often copies of the great models by Tourte, Peccatte and Maire. Below is a Peccatte-inspired bow (fig. 3.7).

Figure 3.7: Violin bow by Jean François Raffin (copyright Filiminov Collection)

Ultimately, Bernard Ouchard emerged as the finest candidate for department head of the new bow-making School. Bernard Ouchard was born in February 15, 1925 in Mirecourt where his family had resided since around 1800. Bernard Ouchard's great-great-grandfather and grandmother, Mr. Ouchard, wine-maker, and his wife, Mrs. Ouchard, dress-maker, had a daughter called Adéle Ouchard. She served a maid in a nobleman's home in Mirecourt. Although Adèle Ouchard never married, she gave birth to a son, Émile François Ouchard, in 1872. E. F. Ouchard was the first member of the family to become a bow-maker. He married Marie Joséphine Collin in 1896 and had

[25] Ibid,. 530.

seven children, six girls and one son named Émile Auguste Ouchard (1900-1969). Émile Auguste Ouchard, bow-maker, married Andrée Charlotte Petot in 1922 and had four children: Anne-Marie the eldest, followed by Bernard, Colette, and Jean-Claude.[26]

Bernard Ouchard grew up in Mirecourt and at the age of 12, started learning bow-making with his father. Throughout his life, he had a great admiration for his father, as shown in his later teachings, and yet never felt that he could reach such a level of bow-making. Ironically, Émile Auguste Ouchard is known to have described his son as a more talented bow-maker than he was.[27] Following his parents' separation in 1946 (they were officially divorced in 1963), his father, E. A. Ouchard, left for America and relocated in New York City. It was a B-52, at the end of the war, which had carried all of his wood and tools. To thank the pilot, E. A. Ouchard made him a bow (in the American model), which is pictured in Christopher Brown's *Discovering Bows for the Double Bass*.[28]

Without his father around, Bernard Ouchard enlisted in the French army and left to serve in the First Indochina War. He experienced the atrocities of war, which left strong marks upon his character. After his return to France in 1948, he often talked to his friends and later students about those terrible days.[29]

After serving in the military, Bernard Ouchard went to work for his uncle, François Lotte, and his cousin, Roger Lotte. After a few months François Lotte sent him

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[26] Christopher Brown, *Discovering Bows for the Double Bass* (Minneapolis, MN: Beaux Arts Editions, 1994), 146.
[27] Gilles Duhaut, interview with the author, October 2009.
[28] Christopher Brown, *Discovering the Bows for the Double Bass*, 67.
[29] Gilles Duhaut, interview with the author, October 2009.

to Vidoudez's workshop in Geneva. Vidoudez was a well-established and respected violin and bow shop established in 1904 by Alfred Vidoudez (1879-1943).[30]

While at Vidoudez, Bernard Ouchard worked for Pierre Vidoudez (1904-1994) made some of his most respected bows (signed: P. Vidoudez) and was fortunate to have access to very fine pernambuco wood. Vidoudez obtained wood from Gillet, who was also a native of Mirecourt originally and who had worked for Eugène Sartory. After Gillet's passing, Vidoudez acquired most of his inventory; he also bought wood from Richaume in Paris.[31] Since Bernard Ouchard never opened his own shop, and always worked in somebody else's workshop, he never had access to his own wood (although his father, E. A. Ouchard, did give him some at the very end of his life). As a result, he was always dependent on others to furnish fine pernambuco blanks to him.[32] During his years in Switzerland, Bernard Ouchard primarily made gold-mounted beautiful bows intended for top-level players.[33]

His collaboration with Vidoudez lasted twenty-two years, during which time he worked in the same workshop as violin restorer, Louis Monnin (b. 1925). Monnin and Ouchard became close friends and they remained in contact after Bernard Ouchard returned to Mirecourt. By 1970, Ouchard's reputation as a master bow-maker had risen to such a degree that Étienne Vatelot contacted him and asked him to come and teach at the newly formed bow-making class at the Mirecourt School.[34] We will never know the exact reasons that motivated Vatelot to offer this position to Ouchard, yet it is possible to credit

[30] For more information <www.gradelle.com/Pierre_Vidoudez.html>
[31] Christophe Schaeffer, interview with author, October 2009.
[32] Louis Monnin, interview with author, November 2009.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.

this to his well respected skills, family legacy and Ouchard's wish to return to France and his roots in Mirecourt.[35]

In 1971, Ouchard started teaching at the Lycée Vuillaume. Even while teaching, he continued making bows that he would sell through the Paris dealers and, later, in Belgium through Jacques Bernard (better known as Bernard de Liège). His career is remembered for several reasons: for his contribution to the revival of the art of French bow-making; for his important role in training new bow-makers at the Mirecourt School; and, finally, by the many fine bows he created throughout his life. According to Stéphane Tomachot:

> It required the total strength of conviction for a handful of violin-makers to affect the return from Geneva of Bernard Ouchard, prestigious representative of an illustrious family of bow-makers. For almost ten years, he was able to transmit his skill to twenty fortunate students in the birthplace of this tradition, Mirecourt, thus giving his heirs to the school of French bow-making.[36]

Bernard Ouchard made bows following his family's tradition and some of his early bows were made in collaboration with his father. His early examples often followed the Hill-style underslide model following his father's models but by 1972, he returned to the more conventional underslide (fig. 3.8).[37]

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[35] Benoît Rolland, interview with the author, July 2010.
[36] Le Canu, *Les Luthiers Français, Les Archetiers Contemporains*, 5.
[37] Vatelot, *Les Archets Français*, 2:476.

Figure 3.8 A: Violin bow by Émile Auguste Ouchard (copyright Tarisio archives)

Figure 3.8 B: Violin bow by Émile François Ouchard (copyright Tarisio archives)

Figure 3.8 C: Violin bow by Bernard Ouchard (copyright Tarisio archives)

Chapter 4

Bernard Ouchard and the Mirecourt School

In 1966, André Malraux, at that time the Ministre de la Culture (French Cultural Minister), asked Marcel Landowski, the Ministry's Director of Music, to find a way to push classical music in France. Landowski had been appointed as the Ministry of Culture's Director of Music in 1966, a move that outraged the politically powerful composer, Pierre Boulez:

> France, mired in a state of musical bankruptcy ever since World War II, could always boast one major asset: Pierre Boulez, 41, the leading voice of the modernist school of composers and a gifted conductor as well. But in 1959. . . Boulez hit the ceiling, canceled all future government-connected engagements in France and fired off a scathing letter, which was published in the weekly Le *Nouvel Observateur*. He accused Malraux of jeopardizing France's musical future, called the Landowski appointment "badly thought out, irresponsible and illogical." Malraux, he charged, should understand "that music is a matter sufficiently important not to have it put into the hands of feebleminded and incompetent men." He dismissed Landowski as "a droll and inconsistent man equipped with little imagination," adding acidly: "The poor chap has finally found something to do." [1]

Among the new initiatives launched by Landowski was increased support of musical-education institutions. As the Mirecourt Museum's curator Valérie Klein explains:

> In 1970, to safeguard the transmission of violin and bow-makers' knowledge, and to the instigation of the profession represented by Étienne Vatelot and Jean Bauer, Marcel Landowski set in motion the creation of the National School of Lutherie in Mirecourt.[2]

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[1] <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,835806,00.html>

[2] Valérie Klein, "Mirecourt, Quatre siècles de Facture Instrumentale," *Musée de la Lutherie* (Mirecourt, April 2010).

Thanks to the hard work of the *luthiers* Étienne Vatelot and Jean Bauer, the École Nationale de Lutherie et d'Archèterie (National School for Violin and Bow-making) opened in 1970 in Mirecourt at the Lycée Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume.[3]

The Lycée Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume is located in the heart of the city of Mirecourt at 5, avenue Graillet. The school can trace its roots back to 1828 when the older part of the building was erected as a school for boys. Originally known as a *lycée municipal* (municipal school), it was named after Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume in 1988. In 1970, a stringed-instrument crafting course and certificate program were added to the curriculum of the Lycée Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume. A new section was created: the École Nationale de Lutherie.[4] In 1971, the Lycée also added a course for bow-making.

For eight consecutive years, starting in 1971, entrance auditions were held and only eighteen students, who graduated from the school as bow-makers, were accepted.[5] Each year, three students were admitted in the bow-making classes, except for the first year when only two students were admitted but not all finished the three-year course of study.[6]

In the first year, 1971, only two students were invited. Benoît Rolland (b. 1954, Paris) came from Paris and played the violin.[7] He grew up in a musical environment, first studying piano with his grandmother, the renowned pianist Germaine Thyssens-Valentin; later, he studied the violin at the Paris Conservatory. When Rolland arrived in Mirecourt,

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[3] For more information see: <http://www.glaaf.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=16&Itemid=33>
[4] For more information see: < http://www.ac-nancy-metz.fr/pres-etab/vuillaume/serveur-nt2.htm>
[5] Stéphane Tomachot, interview with the author, July 2010.
[6] Alfred Akoune, interview with the author, July 2010.
[7] Le Canu, *Les Luthiers Français, Les Archetiers Contemporains*, 70.

he was already a well-trained musician.[8] Jean-Yves Matter (b. 1953, Alsace region) played the oboe. His parents were also musicians but refused to allow him to become a professional musician. It was when they saw an advertisement about the school that they turned their son towards instrument-making.[9]

In 1972, the second year of the École, the school accepted two students.[10] Stéphane Müller (b. 1956, Nice) studied the violin at the Toulouse Conservatory. A semi-professional violin restorer named René Guiraud introduced him to the art of restoring stringed instruments. When Müller arrived at the Mirecourt School in September, he had a broken arm, wich was in a cast. Bernard Ouchard asked him how he was planning to make a bow. To avoid being asked to leave the program, Müller would take his cast off during the day, and then put the cast back on at night.[11] Wilfred Akoune (b.1955, La Courneuve, Paris) had no musical background but showed a clear affinity for the arts. A friend of his who played the cello introduced him to a local violin-maker. It was at that time that Akoune first considered becoming an instrument-maker.[12]

In the third year, 1973, three students entered the school.[13] Martin Devillers (b. 1956, Paris) played the violin, but his main interest was in woodcrafting. Prior to entering the Mirecourt School he was also accepted at the École-Boulle in Paris, a design school.[14] Gilles Duhaut (b. 1957, Cirey-sur-Velouze) did not play a musical instrument prior to entering the school. He had some interest in jewelry design and his high-school advisor

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[8] Benoît Rolland, interview with the author, July 2010.
[9] Jean-Yves Matter, interview with the author, October 2009.
[10] Le Canu, *Les Luthiers Français, Les Archetiers Contemporains*, 70.
[11] Stéphane Müller, interview with the author, October 2009.
[12] Wilfred Akoune, interview with the author, July 2010.
[13] Le Canu, *Les Luthiers Français, Les Archetiers Contemporains*, 70
[14] Martin Devillers, interview with the author, November 2009.

informed him about the Mirecourt School.[15] Sylvie Masson (b. 1957, Paris) was an amateur pianist and the daughter of a well-respected cellist with the Orchestre de Paris. It was through a visit to Mirecourt that she started thinking about becoming a bow-maker.[16]

In the fourth year, 1974, three students were accepted into the bow-making class.[17] Didier Claudel (b. 1959, Mirecourt) is the nephew of René Morizot (1917-2001) who taught violin-making at the school.[18] Jean-Pascal Nehr (b. 1957, Algeria) went to the South of France at the age of eight. He played a little guitar. It was his high-school advisor in Aix-en-Provence who told him about the Mirecourt School.[19] Christophe Schaeffer (b. 1958, Le Mans) studied violin at the Romans Conservatory (near Valence). It was violin-maker Jean-Yves Rouveyre (b. 1948) who suggested the Mirecourt School to him.[20]

In the fifth year, 1975, three students were accepted.[21] Jean Grunberger (b. 1958, Versailles) played the flute and the cello before entering the Mirecourt School, but also enjoyed manual work. His father played the clarinet and his mother sang. On his parents' suggestion and by watching cellist Paul Tortelier on television, he first became intrigued by the art of instrument-making. At the Centre Information et Documentation Jeunesse, (Information and Documentation Center for Youth), he obtained information about the school and later applied.[22] The late Pascal Lauxerois (1959-1994) was Jean-Paul

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[15] Gilles Duhaut, interview with the author, October 2009.
[16] Sylvie Masson, interview with the author, October 2009.
[17] Le Canu, *Les Luthiers Français, Les Archetiers Contemporains*, 70.
[18] Didier Claudel, interview with the author, June 2010.
[19] Jean-Pascal Nehr, interview with the author, October 2009.
[20] Christophe Schaeffer, interview with the author, October 2009.
[21] Le Canu, *Les Luthiers Français, Les Archetiers Contemporains*, 70.
[22] Jean Grunberger, interview with the author, July 2010.

Lauxerois's son and *luthier* Étienne Vatelot's nephew.[23] He never played an instrument but grew up around instrument-making.[24] Stéphane Tomachot (b. 1959, Bourg-la-Reine) didn't grow up in a musical environment but he played a little guitar. It was through a family friend, François Vercken, who worked for the radio station France Musique and had spoken with Jean Bauer (one of the founders of the Mirecourt School) that Tomachot found out about the school.[25]

In the sixth year, 1976, the Committee returned to admitting only two students.[26] Michel Jamonneau (b. 1960, La Rochelle) was not from a family of musicians and did not play an instrument, but he met musicians who introduced him to the Mirecourt School.[27] Jacques Poullot (b. 1960, Dijon) was born into a musical family. His father played the tuba and Jacques learned the piano and trombone. He is one of the few who actually requested to be admitted into the bow-making class.[28]

In the seventh year, 1977, three students joined the school.[29] Éric Grandchamps (b. 1962, Alise-Sainte-Reine) only played a little guitar prior to entering the school. He had already taken sculpture lessons and liked working with wood. Georges Tepho (b. 1961, Saint-Brieuc, Brittany) played viola as a child but quickly became interested in instrument-making.[30] Arnaud Suard (b.1961, Gonesse) did not play an instrument but knew of the Mirecourt School through his older brother, Éric Suard, who was studying

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[23] Millant and Raffin, *L'Archet,* 3:487.
[24] Sévrine Lauxerois, in conversation with the author, March 2009.
[25] Stéphane Tomachot, interview with the author, July 2010.
[26] Le Canu, *Les Luthiers Français, Les Archetiers Contemporains*, 70.
[27] Michel Jamonneau, interview with the author, October 2009.
[28] Jacques Poullot, interview with the author, October 2009.
[29] Le Canu, *Les Luthiers Français, Les Archetiers Contemporains*, 70.
[30] Georges Tepho, interview with the author, October 2009.

violin-making there. Although his parents did not play a musical instrument, his uncle was a violinist with the orchestra of the Opéra de Paris.[31]

In the final year, 1978, only Marielle Gobin (1962, Rochefort-sur-Mer) graduated from that class.[32] After the death of Bernard Ouchard on June 2, 1979, she studied mostly with Roger Lotte.[33]

Every year some students dropped out of the program or were asked to leave; thus, only eighteen students graduated.[34] Of these eighteen alumni of the bow-making classes, nearly all had originally requested to learn violin-making since bow-making was unknown to most youngsters.[35] Only a few had chosen to become bow-makers from the start. Pascal Lauxerois was the only one who started as a violin-maker and switched to bow-making. As the nephew of *luthier* Étienne Vatelot's, Pascal Lauxerois may have wanted to follow in his uncle's footsteps. He was shy and somewhat reserved as a person. The pressure of being related to the founder of the school, may have been considerable. As a result, Pascal switched to bow-making, where less comparison could be made.[36]

The Entrance Exam

Although some applicants to the program, such as Benoît Rolland and Christophe Schaeffer, were good violinists at the time they entered the school, most did not play a stringed instrument and others had no training at all. As a result, the entrance exam to the school had to be devised using disciple-specific that bore no relation to

[31] For more information, visit < http://www.arnaudsuard.com/>.
[32] Le Canu, *Les Luthiers Français, Les Archetiers Contemporains*, 70.
[33] Sylvie Masson, interview with the author, October 2009.
[34] Stéphane Tomachot, interview with the author, July 2010.
[35] Wilfred Akoune, interview with the author, July 2010.
[36] From a conversation with his widow, Séverine Lauxerois.

entrance requirements to traditional music programs (e.g. performance and musicology). The audition process for applicants to the Mirecourt School was long and complicated and set high standards for admission. Auditions happened only once a year and coursework started in the semester following acceptance. Generally, students applying to the school would be between the ages of fourteen and seventeen years old. The entrance process was competitive since approximately two hundred students applied each year and only twenty were invited for an official interview.[37]

First, students would send an application and their academic transcripts. From the many applicants (nearly three hundred per year),[38] only approximately sixty would be invited to audition in person. In most years, four would be accepted as violin-makers and three as bow-makers. Strangely enough, the most gifted applicants were offered violin-making, and the next few were invited to learn bow-making.[39]

At the interview, students would have to go through an evaluation with high standards. From 1970 until 1978, four consecutive principals directed these interviews alongside Bernard Ouchard and René Morizot. The principal asked questions about their aspirations and Bernard Ouchard would generally stay very quiet throughout this entire process. Students also needed to undergo a medical visit and psychological test.[40] In order to test their perception skills, they were asked to compare some violins and bows. The tests were obvious to a trained eye but not to a teenager. They would be shown two violins, one following a Stradivarius pattern and the other a Guarneri, and were asked to

[37] Ibid.
[38] Michel Jamonneau, interview with the author, November 2009.
[39] Martin Devillers, interview with the author, November 2009.
[40] Ibid.

compare them[41] (fig. 4.0). Looking at figure 4.0, a student could have pointed out the differences in carving between the Stradivarius's and Guarneri's f-holes (sometimes referred to as sound holes), as well as the general robust look of the Guarneri compared to that of the Stradivarius. Both the fine inlay and the generally more conscientious workmanship of the Stradivarius pattern could also have been compared. Some may have chosen to talk about the quality of the varnish as well.

Figure 4.0: A Stradivarius violin (left) and a Guarneri model (right)
(copyright Tarisio archives)

[41] Gilles Duhaut, interview with the author, November 2009.

The same would apply to bows. Candidates were shown different models: one might have had a round heel and the other a square one, or a plain button versus a three-piece adjuster, or an octagonal stick next to a round bow[42] (fig 4.1 A-C). Candidates were expected to compare and describe each bow to the best of their abilities.

Figure 4.1A: A violin bow with a round heel (top) and a square heel (bottom) (copyright Tarisio archives)

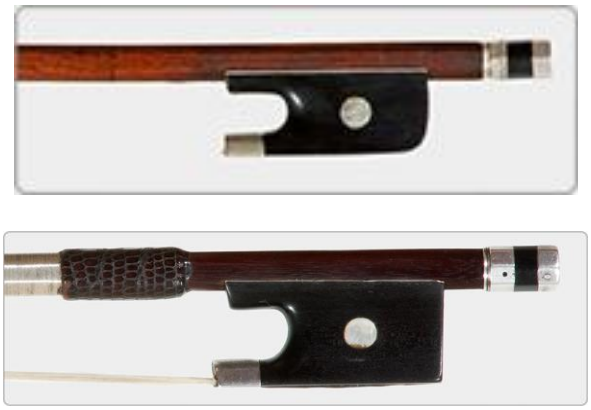

Figure 4.1B: A plain button (top) and a three-piece adjuster (bottom) (copyright Tarisio archives)

[42] Gilles Duhaut, interview with the author, November 2009

Figure 4.1C: An octagonal stick (top) and a round stick (bottom)
(copyright Tarisio archives)

The candidates were also asked to carve with a knife the corner of a violin or perform similar tasks to see whether they would follow the grain of the wood or go against it. The purpose of this was to test the precision of the candidates as a mean of determining whether they had any natural manual gifts.[43] However, in 1977, the hands-on tests were discontinued, probably as most candidates showed poor aptitudes, but the drawing exam was retained.[44] Candidates were asked to draw a violin with accurate proportions. As one may imagine, it is not easy to draw a violin perfectly with even f-holes.[45]

Students would receive a letter in the mail announcing the result of the entrance audition. If they were admitted, they were told that they had either been accepted into the violin classes or the bow classes.[46]

[43] Jean Grunberger, interview with the author, November 2009.
[44] Éric Grandchamps, interview with the author, October 2009.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Michel Jamonneau, interview with the author, October 2009.

The curriculum

The curriculum of the school was that of a traditional French high school with some class periods given over to instrument-making. The curriculum of classes did not change from the program's opening in 1970 until the closing of the bow-making class in 1981. It followed the same format that is currently offered for violin-making.[47]

The school offered a three-year program for stringed instrument-making. The first year it introduced students to instrument making and other required subjects. The next two years prepared them for their *Diplôme des métiers d'art* (diploma of art professions). A *diplôme des métiers d'art* (D.M.A.) was intended for students who chose to concentrate on arts and crafts-related studies prior to graduating from high school. From 1971 until 1981, students were relatively young: most entered at the age of fourteen.[48] According to the tradition of the secular French school system, no tuition was ever paid since the Lycée Vuillaume is public, but an entrance audition was required for the special section of instrument-making established within the school.[49] It was then designed as a high school where students would learn a skill and earn a *Brevet de technicien* (B.T.), for which students were required to pass the French *baccalauréat* examinations in French, physics, English, music, drawing and possibly physical education as well as the instrument-making test.[50]

Currently, the school follows the same format as it did during the 1971-1981 period. During the first year, thirty-four hours of weekly coursework are scheduled. They are intended to prepare the students for the following two-year curriculum leading to the

[47] Jean Grunberger, interview with the author, November 2009.
[48] Wilfred Akoune, interview with the author, July 2010.
[49] Gilles Duhaut, interview with the author, October 2009.
[50] Benoît Rolland, interview with the author, July 2010.

Brevet de technicien (B.T.), since 1982 called a D.M.A. degree.[51] They are divided in the following way: twenty-four hours in the workshop learning how to make an instrument, two hours of French studies, two hours of English classes, one to two hours of mathematics, one hour of science, one hour of drawing, and one to two hours of music education.

The instrument-making students were integrated within the school's regular classes for all the general education subjects.[52] The academic curriculum was an essential part of the course of study and the bow-making classes were only added to create this specialized program. It is interesting to point out that no consideration was ever given to offering a course on the history of instrument-making or on the history of the bow, but there was a very basic introduction to the history of music.[53] Instrument-making was taught separately from practical music courses except for the requirement to learn how to play a stringed instrument.

In the next two years, students spent twenty hours in the workshop (learning how to make and repair an instrument) with an additional two hours of French studies, three hours of English classes the first year and two and a half the second, three and a half hours of economics and business introduction, three hours of science, three hours of art studies, one hour of art techniques and civilization, two hours of drawing, and two hours of music education. By the end of the course of study, students were required to present

[51] <http://www.ac-nancy-metz.fr/bassin-epinal/formations/detail/270.htm>
[52] Jean-Pascal Nehr, interview with the author, November 2009.
[53] Jean Grunberger, interview with the author, June 2010.

either a cello or two violins or violas and to answer questions posed by a jury in order to receive their D.M.A. degrees.[54]

Uguette Berger was a violin teacher and music history teacher at the Mirecourt School.[55] Mademoiselle Berger was also in charge of the choir in which all violin and bow-making students were required to sing regularly.[56] Most graduates do not retain a fond memory of their instrumental lessons with Mademoiselle Berger who was an older woman who taught the violin with both elbows against the body.[57] (it was the proper way for a lady to play in the early twentieth century since showing the armpit might have been considered inappropriate). The good violinists were allowed to keep studying with their private teachers[58] but some were not required to take formal lessons due to their high level of proficiency.[59] Regardless of the teaching methods of Mademoiselle Berger, little importance was given to performance at the school. To the present day, it is common for a bow or a violin-maker not to know how to play a stringed instrument.[60] From the approximately forty hours of coursework required per week, twenty were spent in the workshop and the other in traditional coursework. Music classes were included within the coursework hours.[61]

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[54]<http://www.acnancymetz.fr/presetab/Vuillaume/poirot/1slorraine/lutherie/page3.html>
[55] Gilles Duhaut, interview with the author, October 2009.
[56] Jean Grunberger, interview with the author, June 2010.
[57] Gilles Duhaut, interview with the author, October 2009.
[58] Christophe Schaeffer, interview with the author, October 2009.
[59] Benoît Rolland, interview with the author, July 2010.
[60] Wilfred Akoune, interview with the author, July 2010.
[61] Jean Grunberger, interview with the author, June 2010.

Bernard Ouchard's teaching method

Bernard Ouchard's teaching method evolved throughout his years on the faculty in Mirecourt. Prior to 1971, he had never been a teacher and clearly had to find his own methodology.[62] As a result, he transmitted his own personal experience: he taught the way his father and grandfather had instructed him. Early on, he taught *rabotage* (using a planing mill) and removal of the three axes, which involves cutting the wood into a perfect square. Then he showed how to work on the head of the stick, making a *faux équerre* (false flat-angle bracket) before working on the small details with a file. Finally, he would teach how to make the rest of the stick, with instruction on cambering and adding the head plate. Once the stick was ready, he supervised work on making the frog and, especially, adjusting the length of the *passant* (ring).[63]

The adjusters generally arrived pre-made and had been directly purchased from an older gentleman called Jérôme. He had a shop in Mirecourt with good head plates, but the rest of his merchandise consisted of diverse instruments. According to the graduates, he had an unusual character and probably exaggerated every story he ever told. Ouchard bought his buttons from him, but they were often not very good; frequently some would have to be fixed.[64] Students at the school would use those adjusters but were also taught how to make them.[65]

Interestingly, the school was not ready to receive students when it opened its doors in 1971 to the bow-making students. At the beginning of September, the school had no pernambuco for the students from which to make bows. To help Ouchard, Charles

[62] Jean-Yves Matter, interview with the author, October 2009.
[63] Éric Grandchamps, interview with the author, October 2009.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Jean-Yves Matter, interview with the author, October 2009.

Alfred Bazin (1907-1987), a member the Bazin family of bow-makers, opened his attic and allowed Ouchard to take blanks. Furthermore, the school had no tools to provide to the students. The Gillet family kindly gave some old tools to get started and, later, Ouchard ordered tools from Moser. Moser had made bow-making tools for many shops in Mirecourt, including that of Laberte.[66] By 1972, students would use bee-wood, the less precious wood, during their first year of instruction and only move to pernambuco in the second year.[67]

Until 1974, Ouchard taught at the École Normale building (Picture 4.2 A). The classroom in which Ouchard taught was similar to a bow-maker's workstation. Students sat two to a workbench, facing each other, with a freshman opposite to an older student. As a result, the younger student could easily watch the older, more experience student work and ask him for guidance (fig. 4.2 B and C).[68] Later, students sat three to a bench with two facing each other and a third person at one end.[69] In 1974, the bow-making class moved from the classroom at the École Normale (picture 4.2 B) to the Vieux Lycée.

[66] Benoît Rolland, interview with the author, July 2010.
[67] Stéphane Müller, interview with the author, November 2009.
[68] Sylvie Masson, interview with the author, October 2009.
[69] Wilfred Akoune, interview with the author, July 2010.

4.2 A: École Normale at the Lycée Vuillaume (copyright Benoît Rolland)

Figure 4.2 B: The Bernard Ouchard Classroom cs. 1973 (copyright L&V Le Canu)

Figure 4.2 C: The Bernard Ouchard classroom ca.1973 (copyright Benoît Rolland)

Bernard Ouchard was a strict teacher and students looked up to him. As a result, students would only bring to his attention a finished project (fig. 4.3).[70] He only taught how to make bows according to his own methods and had no interest in discussing the old masters. Never were the students encouraged to make copies of Tourte or Peccatte models.[71] As far as Ouchard was concerned, he believed that performers should only play on new bows and disregarded the nineteenth-century bows. He even disliked earlier twentieth-century bows, such as the ones made by Eugène Sartory.[72] It is hard to imagine how a bow-maker could dismiss the earlier masters, but Bernard Ouchard was stubborn on this point. He had a sure style of crafting a bow, and possibly considered his bows to be better playing-bows for contemporary players.

[70] Sylvie Masson, interview with the author, October 2009.
[71] Gilles Duhaut, Michel Jamoneau, interviews with the author, October 2009.
[72] Christophe Schaeffer, interview with the author, October 2009.

Figure 4.3: Bernard Ouchard c. 1973 (copyright Benoît Rolland)

Most graduates of the program remember Ouchard's strictness: they recall how they shed tears following Ouchard's comments and how they worried about being expelled.[73] Sylvie Masson may have had one of the hardest times at the school since she was the only female bow-maker. In the same year that she was admitted, two other young women were admitted in violin-making but Sylvie Masson is the first French woman ever to create a bow from beginning to end. Thus, she has the distinction of being called an *archetière,* a female bow-maker, and she is the first person to whom this term applies.[74]

At first, Masson believed that Bernard Ouchard was misogynous and preferred not to have a female student.[75] From the start he would say "vous" to her instead of "tu" as he addressed the boys [in French "vous" is the polite way of addressing a person but all children are called by the more casual "tu"]. He sat her across from him at his desk

[73] Sylvie Masson, interview with the author, October 2009.
[74] *Archetiére* is now a common term in French, thanks to the many female bow-makers who followed Sylvie Masson's path.
[75] Sylvie Masson, interview with the author, October 2009.

and never spoke to her for the first few weeks except to explain the very strict minimum. When he looked at her while working, their eyes would never meet. As a result of his behavior, she could not keep up with the class. Finally, Benoît Rolland, who was aware of the fact that she was falling behind in her studies, offered to help. Despite Ouchard's apparent opposition to Benoît's intervention, one day Sylvie Masson made the bold move of moving to Benoît's workbench to ask for help. She never had to do it again: from that moment onward, Ouchard started to accept her.[76]

But Ouchard also had a good sense of humor: he enjoyed playing billiards and singing songs with some of his students.[77] A few former students recall pranks Ouchard tulled while they were cambering a bow. Cambering is dangerous since it is easy to break a bow when heating the stick. While students were trying to camber, Ouchard would enter the room with a big hammer and make a very loud noise. As a result, many broke bows while cambering (fig 4.4).[78]

Figure 4.4: At the Mirecourt School, cambering a bow over ambers
(copyright Benoît Rolland)

[76] Ibid.
[77] Éric Grandchamps, interview with the author, November 2009.
[78] Stéphane Müller, interview with the author, November 2009.

Although his legacy as a master bow-maker revived the French art of bow-making, the scars of his parents' separation, the Indochina war, and his marital problems accumulated into what his students believed to be alcohol abuse. According to many of his students, however, his addiction never showed in his work or ability as a teacher.[79]

Life at the Mirecourt School

Life at the Mirecourt School was not always easy.[80] Most students entered the Lycée Vuillaume and the Mirecourt School at the age of fourteen. Mirecourt was not a big city and it was often difficult to reach it by train. It would take students an entire day to go from Paris to Mirecourt.[81] It is a difficult age at which to move away from home to enter a boarding school. However, all reacted very differently. Some enjoyed the freedom from the parental household while others missed it.[82] The students formed bonds and friendships, many of which remain to this day. But to many of the students, this family-like relationship had to include as well a father figure. He would be one to whom they could look up, one who knew them, one who taught them. This figure became Bernard Ouchard.[83]

From 1970 until 1981, four different principals directed the school. The first, until the spring of 1971, was Monsieur Pariente. Originally from the French island of Corsica, he ran the boarding school in a very strict manner and would often raise his hand to spank

[79] Sylvie Masson, Jean Pascal Nehr, Jacques Poulot, Georges Tepho, interviews with the author, October 2009.
[80] Sylvie Masson, interview with the author, October 2009.
[81] Benoît Rolland, interview with the author, July 2010.
[82] Jean-Yves Matter, interview with the author, October 2009.
[83] Most of the students interviewed agreed with this matter.

the students.[84] He would not allow any negative conduct from the students.[85] The next principal, Pierre Matisse, arrived in 1971 and stayed until 1976.[86] He was also very strict but students had mixed relations with him. Some liked him, while others felt that his former career as a boxer made him a little too physical when disciplinary actions needed to be taken.[87] From 1976 until 1980, Monsieur Converset became principal and seemed to be a little less strict than his predecessors.[88] In 1980, Madame Ducant became principal. She was also very strict.[89] These four principals shaped the everyday life of the boarding school, from the allowances to go out during the weekends, to living off-campus.

The students were housed in dormitories, with the boys and girls in separate buildings. Even for meals, boys and girls were separated.[90] The boys' dormitories comprised very large rooms containing approximately twenty-five beds. Boys received no privacy until the last year, when they were housed in smaller rooms with only a handful of beds.[91] The girls' dormitories were similar, except that a small wall, which did not reach the ceiling, divided the large room into groups of about five beds. Both dormitories were very noisy and there was no effort to group students according to their interests.[92] Some students managed to rent a room in Mirecourt after the first year. But in order to receive approval to live away from the dormitories, it was necessary to obtain a

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[84] Jean-Yves Matter, interview with the author, October 2009.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Benoît Rolland, interview with the author, July 2010.
[87] Jean-Yves Matter, Benoît Rolland, Christophe Schaeffer and Martin Devillers, interviews with the author, 2009.
[88] Christophe Schaeffer, interview with the author, October 2009.
[89] Éric Grandchamps, interview with the author, October 2009.
[90] Sylvie Masson, interview with the author, October 2009.
[91] Stéphane Müller, interview with the author, October 2009.
[92] Sylvie Masson, interview with the author, October 2009.

legal guardian or reach the age of eighteen.[93] Mirecourt was a small city and it was not hard to find an inexpensive room to rent. Many chose that option because of the little freedom offered at the school.[94]

During the week, students stayed at the school and were only allowed the possibility of going outside for a few hours on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons.[95] All French schools start early in the morning and finish around 5:00 PM except for Wednesdays when the school day ends after lunch. The daily routine at the Lycèe Vuillaume began with breakfast at 7:00 a.m. and classes started at 8:00 a.m. At noon, lunch would be served and classes would resume at 1:00 p.m. They lasted until 5:00 p.m. From 5:00 to 6:00 p.m. students were allowed time off before doing homework from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. Dinner was served at 7:00 p.m. followed by another homework hour from 8:00 until 9:00 p.m. Lights went out at 9:30 p.m.[96] Students had very little time for themselves during the week but they created a photography club and often played billiards.[97] By 1977, students were also given permission to work alone in the workshop during the weekends or rest hours.[98]

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[93] Georges Tepho, interview with the author, October 2009.
[94] Michel Jamonneau, Jacques Poulot, Éric Grandchamps, Georges Tepho, interviews with the author, October 2009.
[95] Jean-Yves Matter, interview with the author, October 2009.
[96] Stéphane Müller, interview with the author, October 2009.
[97] Sylvie Masson, interview with the author, October 2009.
[98] Gilles Duhaut, interview with the author, October 2009.

The final years

By 1976, the Mirecourt School had gained enough renowm for the producer Bruno Monsaingeon to make a short film about it.[99] Montsaingeon interviewed Étienne Vatelot who discussed Tourte and other bow makers. The film features many of the students in attendance at that time.[100]

By 1978, Bernard Ouchard's health had strongly declined. His vision had deteriorated and students had to help him make frogs and buttons.[101] Starting in 1979, Ouchard spent time in and out of the hospital and Jean-Claude Ouchard, his brother, substituted for him from around Easter 1979. Most of his students assume that his drinking habits played a strong role in his passing but it is unclear what caused his early death at the age of fifty-four.[102] Bernard Ouchard's position was only a half-time position (twenty hours per week) and, following his death on June 2, 1979, the program never held auditions again. Instead, the bow-making faculty position was cut due to the school's financial problems.[103] Following Bernard Ouchard's passing, the School chose to end the bow-making classes but continue with the violin-making classes. It is unclear why this decision was made.

By May 1979, Roger François Lotte (fig. 4.5) had replaced Ouchard to finish the education of the last few students.[104] As much as Ouchard represented Mirecourt and the Ouchard family legacy, Roger Lotte was following the Mirecourt tradition of the

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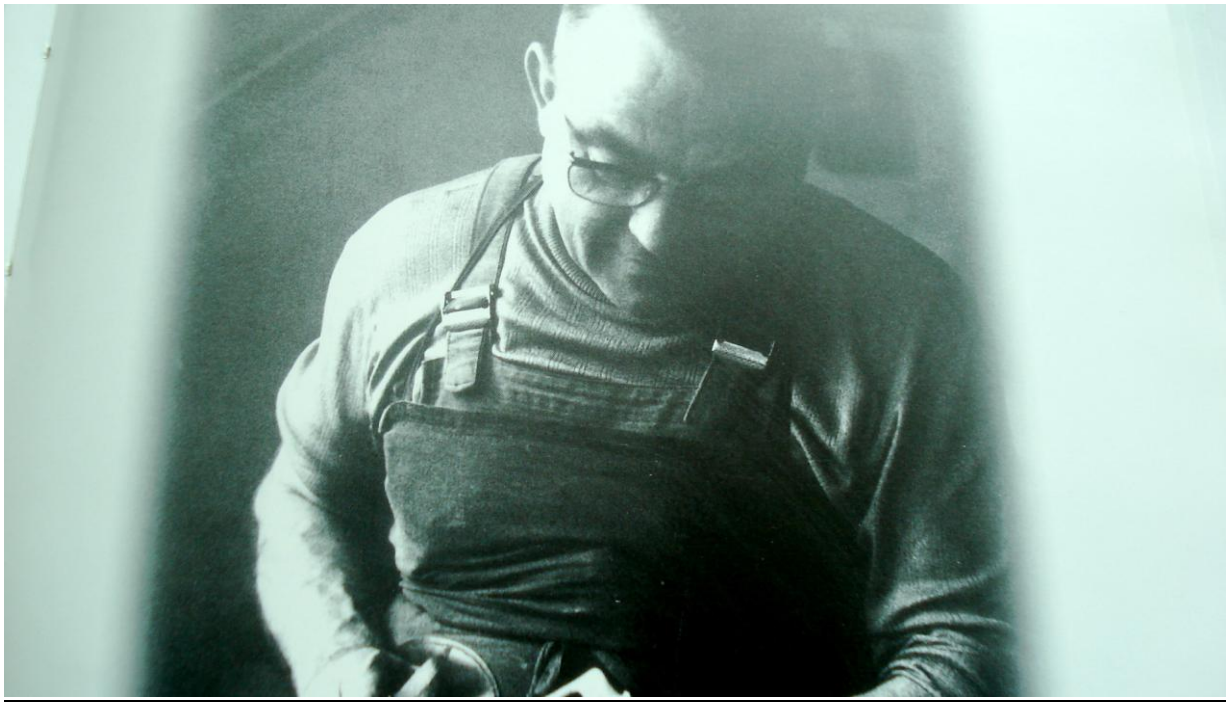
[99] Bruno Monsaingeon, Chemins de la Musique: Op. 10: The Kings' Bow, 1976. <www.brunomonsaingeon.com>
[100] Christophe Schaeffer, interview with the author, November 2009.
[101] Martin Devillers and Gilles Duhaut, interview with the author, October 2009.
[102] Most of Ouchard's students, interview with the author, 2009-2010.
[103] Sylvie Masson, interview with the author, October 2009.
[104] Georges Tepho, interview with the author, November 2009.

twentieth century: making bows quickly while possibly overlooking some of the details. It was a great privilege given to Lotte to follow in the footsteps of Bernard Ouchard and he truly enjoyed teaching the remaining students, even though he knew his position would be short-lived.[105] By the fall of 1979, there were only four students left at the École and Lotte decided to teach them in two-week rotations. Every two weeks, two students would go to his workshop in Mirecourt, while the other two would work at school on their own.[106]

Figure 4.5: Roger François Lotte (copyright L&V Le Canu)



The ten years of bow-making at the Lycée Vuillaume allowed France to take pride in the restitution of a tradition that had nearly become lost. It is sad that such a wonderful learning environment, free of charge and open to all, had to close its doors. Most graduates are divided on the issue of whether to revive the bow-making courses in

[105] Jacques Poullot, interview with the author, November 2009.
[106] Georges Tepho, interview with the author, November 2009.

Mirecourt. Graduates went on to teach others, generally in their own workshops, and transmit their knowledge.[107] Although art should not be judged by its price tag, modern bows can now fetch higher prices than those by the respected masters such as Eugène Sartory and F. N. Voirin.[108] If so, the future of bow-making is safe, since the demand from players for a quality-made bow will only grow. This trend has already been highly visible in the violin industry. Bows are very delicate and break easily. It is possible to imagine that within the next few generations, very few fine examples from the nineteenth century will be available. It has already become difficult to find a fully original and well-preserved bow by the great masters of the nineteenth century.

[107] From all the interviews conducted by the author.
[108] <http://www.benoitrolland.com/bio2.php>

Chapter 5

Graduates of the Mirecourt School and their Current Careers

Upon receiving their diploma from the Mirecourt School, graduates were placed in the workshop of a *luthier*.[1] At that transitional stage, from student to professional, he or she could learn about the business side of bow-making and start to understand the intricacies of buying wood. Although Bernard Ouchard taught how to create a bow, he never explained how to choose wood or order materials. After a few years as apprentices in a shop, most graduates were able to establish independent careers. It is commonly believed that the school trained some of the best bow-makers in the world, as shown by their collective winning of at least thirty-four prizes at international stringed-instrument competitions, but the experience of selling and running a business requires more than schooling.[2]

Most violin shops employ at least one bow-maker since they sell both bows and violins. The bow-maker handles most bow-related issues such as repairs but especially re-hairing. Since a violinist needs to re-hair a bow every few months, the re-hairing of bows is very lucrative. The Mirecourt graduates were perfect candidates to handle such tasks. Along with the restoration of bows, they also made bows and introduced themselves to potential buyers through their employees.

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[1] Michel Jamonneau, interview with the author, November 2009.

[2] Graduates of the Mirecourt School received the following prizes: Violin Society of America (eleven prizes); Ville de Paris Competition (nine prizes); Meilleur Ouvrier de France (four prizes); Ottawa Competition (two prizes); Portland Competition (two prizes); Maître d'Art and prizes at Musicora (one prize), Maurice Vieux Competition (one prize); Manchester Competition (one prize); Mittenwald Competition (one prize); and Walkman Competition (one prize).

Every November, the city of Mirecourt celebrated the holiday of Saint Cécile.[3] At that time, the *luthiers* came from Paris and abroad. During the years that the bow-making school was in existence, Bernard Ouchard (and later Lotte) had each student leave his or her best bow on the workbench as a display. Since all students had an assigned place at the shared workbench, it was clear who had made which bow. It was generally the silver mounted bow, the one made for the final examination, which was displayed. At that time, *luthiers* would asked Ouchard about the bows and offered to invite one of the graduates to their shop.[4]

After their graduations, each one of the Ouchard-trained bow-makers followed a different path. Some kept making bows, becoming writers on the subject of bows and bow-innovators, while others concentrated more on the restoration and educational side of bow-making. Upon graduation, all started their careers by following the bow-making precepts taught by Ouchard at Mirecourt: however, gradually, with time and experience, each carved bows in his or her unique style. As a result, although graduates had all been taught the same way, each found a singular place as a unique bow-maker.

Following his graduation from the Mirecourt School, Jean-Yves Matter started working for the *luthier* Jean Camurat in Paris until 1979.[5] There, he learned his skills as an employed bow-maker and then moved to Strasbourg to start his own business. Later, from 1984 to 1985, he taught at the École de Lutherie de Québec. Following a short return to France, he moved to Portugal in 1987, first to Lisbon and then, in 1997, to

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[3] In the Catholic tradition, Saint Cécile is the Catholic patron saint of musicians.
[4] Wilfred Akoune, interview with the author, July 2010.
[5] In the 1970's, Paris had many important violin and bow shops. They were all located on the same street, the Rue de Rome. These Parisian shops were known as the workshops of Camurat, Chancereul, Dupuy, Joliet, Lanne, Sabatier, Vatelot and many more.

Porto. Throughout his life, Monsieur Matter made many bows, some of which were in modern (post-Tourte) style and others, made during his years in Paris, were copies of Baroque bows. Interestingly, during his years in Strasbourg and Canada, he also learned how to make violins. Although he stopped making bows about fifteen years ago, his style was greatly influenced by the elegance of the fine work by François Nicolas Voirin. Voirin's bows are very attractive in look with a high, noble and round head (comparable to the Peccatte heads) forming an eye-catching beauty in the general contour. He now mostly repairs and restores bows as well as violins.[6] He signs his bows: J –Y MATTER LISBON.[7]

Unlike Monsieur Matter, Benoît Rolland never stopped making bows and was always searching for ways to enhance his bow creations. Following his study with Bernard Ouchard, Rolland returned to Paris and opened his own workshop in 1976, which he maintained until he moved to the Island of Bréhat in 1982. It is interesting to note that Rolland developed his style very quickly after studying with Ouchard and was named Best Artisan of France as well as receiving a *Médaille d'or du travail* (Gold Medal for Workmanship) in 1979. While in Bréhat, in 1983, he also received a *Diplôme national d'archetier d'art* (National Bow-maker Certificate).[8] There, he developed the first carbon fiber bow of professional quality. Rolland invented a new concept of bows by replacing pernambuco wood with carbon fiber and including a screwing mechanism that allowed the performer to adjust the cambering of the bow. Although this invention was groundbreaking, Monsieur Rolland still continued to make pernambuco bows. In 2000 he

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[6] Jean Yves Matter, interview with the author, October 2009
[7] Le Canu, *Les Luthiers Français, Les Archetiers Contemporains*, 41.
[8] Le Canu, *Les Luthiers Français, Les Archetiers Contemporains*, 55

created his thousandth pernambuco bow; by 2007, he had created twelve hundred bows. He has written extensively about the bow and often gives lectures. Continuously studying the old masters, Rolland has been influenced in the creation of his bows by the styles of Dominique Peccatte, François Xavier Tourte and Nicolas Maire. All of the bows by these makers are characterized by the square head (compared to the head of the later Voirin model), and were built for a strong and lavish sound. Rolland's early bows were signed (in chronological order according to Monsieur Rolland): B. ROLLAND À PARIS, BENOÎT ROLLAND PARIS, and Benoît ROLLAND. In 2008, he started his new line of bows, following thirty-five years of bow-making, which he refers to as the "Signature" bows.[9] He signs his bows Benoît ROLLAND on one side and Signature on the other.[10]

Figure 5.1: Violin bow by Benoît Rolland (copyright Tarisio archives)

Stéphane Müller graduated in 1975, as did Wilfred Akoune. Müller went on to work for Jean Schmitt in Lyon from 1975-76 and in 1978 won a top prize from the

[9] For more information, see http://www.benoîtrolland.com/bio2.php
[10] For more information, visit <www.benoîtrolland.com>

Marcel Vatelot Foundation. This prize allowed him to travel to Brazil for a year to improve his knowledge of pernambuco. Upon his return to France in 1984, he opened his own workshop in Toulouse. In 1990, he started collaborating with Jean-Pascal Nehr (also a Mirecourt graduate, class of 1957) to create a new line of bows; these are stamped Nehr-Müller. Although Bernard Ouchard provided the foundation, it was by studying the work of the great makers and gradually evolving, especially during his first few years, that Müller found his personal style most influenced by Joseph Henry (1823-1870). Joseph Henry's sticks are similar to that of the Peccatte model (especially since Henry studied with Peccatte), but the heads are a little squarer and flatter on the cheeks than those of Peccatte.[11] Müller signs his bows: STÉPHANE MULLER or NEHR & MULLER À PARIS.[12]

Figure 5.2: Violin bow by Joseph Henry (copyright Tarisio archives)

[11] Millant and Raffin, *L'Archet,* 2:312.
[12] Stéphane Müller, interview with the author, October 2009.

Figure 5.3: Violin bow by Stéphane Müller (private collection)

Wilfred Akoune followed a different path. Upon graduating, he was offered work in Amsterdam at the well-known shop of Max Moller. At that time, he learned to appreciate many older bows dating from the early-nineteenth century. Upon his return to France in 1977, he started as a freelance bow-maker and restorer in Paris, walking the Rue de Rome, from Sabatier's to Boyer's instrument workshops, in hope of finding freelance work.[13] On Wednesdays and Fridays, he stopped at every shop to determine if any help was needed in restoring bows, re-hairing, or any similar tasks. In 1978, he opened a small shop at the Rue de Turin, where he worked for the next four years. In

[13] The Rue de Rome in Paris is a street where bow-makers and violin-makers are all established next to each other. That same street is also adjacent to the Paris National Conservatory of Music.

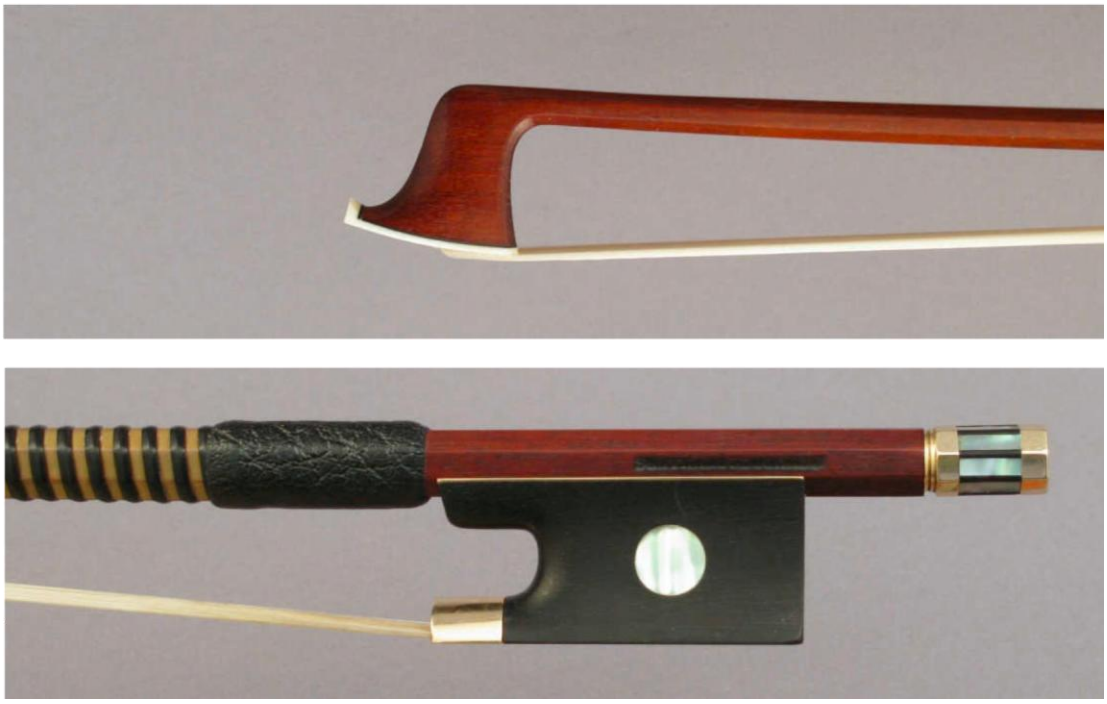
1982, he stopped making bows and took his career in a different direction: he became a recording sound engineer. About ten years later, in 1992, Akoune returned to bow-making and, in 1995, marked his return to the profession by displaying his latest work at a stand at the Musicora Instrument Fair in Paris. He now makes bows in Paris that reflect his training with Ouchard but in a style that has evolved through study of the nineteenth-century masters. Akoune does not always sign his bows, but, when he does, the signature reads: Wilfred Akoune Paris.[14]

A 1976 graduate of the bow-making class, Martin Devillers was offered a position in Portland, Oregon at Paul Schuback's shop. Schuback, much older than Martin Devillers, had studied violin-making in Germany and bow-making in Mirecourt with the Morizot family. In 1984, Monsieur Devillers returned to France; he worked in Paris with Stéphane Tomachot (Mirecourt School, class of 1978) before opening his own shop in Paris in 1986 and in Toulon in 1988. Not until 1989 did he settle in Engin, in the Grenoble area, where he now resides. After winning many awards for his bow-making, he earned five "Certificates of Merit" from the Violin Society of America Competitions in 1976, 1978 and 1980. In 1991, he received the Grand Prix de la ville de Paris for his bow-making and, from the Vatelot Foundation, the Prix du Meilleur Français pour un archet de violon et alto (Prize for Best French Instrument-maker for a violin and viola bow).[15] His style reflected his training with Ouchard; however, upon his return to Paris,

[14] Wilfred Akoune, interview with the author, July 2010.
[15] The Étienne Vatelot Foundation promotes French instrument-making, especially young bow and violin-makers. This is not an international competition.

he turned to the more elegant Voirin style (see chapter 2).[16] He signs his bows: M. DEVILLERS À PARIS.[17]

Figure 5.3: Violin bow by Martin Devillers (copyright Tarisio archives)



The Mirecourt School placed Gilles Duhaut, who graduated in 1976, with Jean Camurat at whose shop he worked for a year. Following his mandatory military service in 1977, Duhaut returned to Mirecourt, where he spent a year working at the Société Française de Lutherie (Sofraluth). In 1979, he worked for Paul Didier in Mirecourt. At that time, he primarily restored bows but developed financial problems because of lack of clientele: Mirecourt had no orchestra and few musicians. To augment his income, he helped Bernard Ouchard, whose vision had declined, to make frogs for sticks to be sold to Jacques Bernard (better known as Bernard De Liège). Although Monsieur Ouchard had no problems working with ebony frogs, it was hard for him to make the ivory ones

[16] Martin Devillers, interview with the author, October 2009.
[17] Le Canu, *Les Luthiers Français, Les Archetiers Contemporains*, 24.

and it was with the production of the ivory frogs that Duhaut's help was indispensable. Following his work at Mirecourt, Gilles Duhaut moved to Nancy, then Metz, and often was asked to show his work in Japan, which started a long-term bow-export business with Japan and, later, America. He then turned his bow production toward the international market. Although he wanted to reopen the Mirecourt School, he was unable to do so as the French government was not interested in re-opening the section.[18] On the other hand, after only six months of living in Mirecourt, he was soon asked to take a student into his workshop: Pierre Guillaume who is now in Brussels. Duhaut had a very hard time moving away from the Ouchard style. The Ouchard style is favored by many performers and well respected by bow-makers. Ouchard's bows are always well balanced, creating an even tone and of superior craftsmanship although some players may miss the more robust, Peccatte-style power. In 1982, Duhaut's bows still looked like Ouchard's and it took him until 1989 to move away from that style and find his own style. Duhaut became most interested in the Pajeot School, and it influenced his current style.[19] The Pajeot style can be defined by the strong, thick heads, straight on the back and pointed in the front.[20] In 1993, Duhaut received a first prize at the Musicora Competition.[21] Although he created a few Baroque bows, he often made "new bows"

[18] Jean Grunberger, interview with the author, July 2010.
[19]Gilles Duhaut, interview with author, October 2009.
[20] Millant and Raffin, *L'Archet,* 1:229.
[21] Le Canu, *Les Luthiers Français, Les Archetiers Contemporains*, 26.

similar to those of Gilles Nehr's (b. 1974) *tête-bêche* model[22] (fig. 5.4), but using different materials. He signs his bows: Glle A DUHAUT (fig. 5.5).[23]

Figure 5.4: Gilles Nehr violin bow *tête-bêche model* (copyright Gilles Nehr)

[22] The *tête-bêche* bow model was created in order to solidify the typical breaks and physical weakness of the pernambuco wood. The pernambuco stick is attached to a metal head and a fixed frog.

[23] Gilles Duhaut, interview with author, October 2009.

Figure 5.5: Violin bow by Gilles Duhaut (copyright Tarisio archives)

Upon graduating in 1976, Sylvie Masson continued her work with Mirecourt instructors Roger Lotte and Benoît Rolland (who had graduated two years before her). In 1977, she worked in Geneva, Switzerland before returning to Paris a year later and opening her own shop. Her style was influenced by the older bows she saw after leaving Mirecourt. Like most of Ouchard's students, Masson had to search for her own style but started by copying his style. Currently she makes Baroque bows as well as some Classical-style and a few modern-style bows, but she is now better known for her re-hairing and repairs. She signs her bows: SYLVIE MASSON à PARIS.[24]

[24] Sylvie Masson, interview with the author, October 2009.

Figure 5.6: Violin bow by Sylvie Masson (private collection)

The graduates of the class of 1977 were Jean-Pascal Nehr, Christophe Schaeffer, and Didier Claudel. Jean-Pascal Nehr started working for many of the Parisian shops such as Sabatier, Lanne, Camurat, and Chancereul. Not until 1987 did he move to Marseilles to the shop of Charles L. Hommel. During his years in Marseilles, his bow-making style was strongly influenced by the Voirin style. At some time during the next three years, he opened his own workshop in Marseilles where he still resides.[25] In 1989, he was a laureate of the Mittenwald Competition[26] and since 1990, he has turned his attention to the restoration of the early nineteenth-century French bow. His bow-making styles have evolved more toward that of François Xavier Tourte. He signs his bows: JEAN-PASCAL NEHR À PARIS or NEHR & MULLER À PARIS.[27]

[25] Jean-Pascal Nehr, interview with the author, October 2009.
[26] Le Canu, *Les Luthiers Français, Les Archetiers Contemporains*, 45.
[27] Ibid.

Figure 5.7: Violin bow by Jean-Pascal Nehr (from a quartet of bows-private collection)

Christophe Schaeffer also graduated in 1977. In 1978, he won a gold medal from the Violin Society of America and started working for Philippe Dupuy in Paris. Dupuy was Eugène Sartory's (1871-1946) grandson and, as a result, he had the privilege of having access to Sartory's wood. According to their early contract, Schaeffer was to make three bows per month for Dupuy.[28] He knew that wood well since Ouchard often made bows for Dupuy, and Dupuy, in return for the bows, paid Ouchard with wood. Schaeffer then carried the finished bows to Paris and returned with blanks for Bernard Ouchard. Although Christophe Schaffer's bow-making style was greatly influenced by Eugène Sartory, owing to his access to Philippe Dupuy's collection of late Sartory's, his earlier style followed that of Bernard Ouchard. Sartory's model was very consistent,

[28] Isabel Thomson, "Un Archetier," *Strad Magazine* (April 1992): 346-7.

always well balanced and of ideal weight, with a slightly elongated frog.[29] Schaeffer now resides in Avignon but commutes to Paris, where he owns a workshop. He signs his bows: CHR. SCHAEFFER À PARIS.[30]

Figure 5.9: Violin bow by Christophe Schaeffer (copyright Tarisio archives)

Following his graduation, Didier Claudel worked for Bernard Bossert until 1981 before moving to the Haute-Savoie region, where he worked on his own until 1985. In 1986, he relocated to London, where he worked for Frederick Phelps until his return to France in 1990. He then established his workshop in Lannepax (in south western France) and in 1991, he received a "Mention Spéciale du Jury" at the Ville de Paris Competition. He does not always sign his bows, but some have a stamp of: D. Claudel.[31]

[29] Millant and Raffin, *L'Archet*, I: 106-8.
[30] Christophe Schaeffer, interview with the author, October 2009.
[31] Le Canu, *Les Luthiers Français, Les Archetiers Contemporains*, 32.

Figure 5.10: Violin bow by Didier Claudel (private collection)

Jean Grunberger received his technician's certificate in 1978, as did Pascal Lauxerois and Stéphane Tomachot. Upon Grunberger's graduation, he was scheduled to work for the Camurat workshop, where Jean-Yves Matter was already working, but eventually Grunberger found himself without a place to go since Camurat did not need two bow-makers. As a result, Grunberger started working on his own and completed a short course in Benoît Rolland's workshop in Paris and in 1979, he was hired by Rolland. When Benoît Rolland left for the Island of Bréhat in 1984, Grunberger took over the workshop and stayed for six years. In 1990, he left Paris to work with Jean-Yves Tanguy in Caen until 1996, when he returned to the Southeast region. In 2001, he moved to the United States to work for Peter Prier in Salt Lake City, taking over after Benoît Rolland. He worked at the Salt Lake City bow-making school until 2006, when it stopped offering classes. He is now back in France and makes bows in Angers. His earlier bow-making style, following his studies with Ouchard, can be explained through the work of the old

French Masters such as Vigneron *Père*. Later he became interested in the very thin bows of the late Voirin models. The late Voirin bows, characterized by their lightness in style and weight, clearly corresponded to the taste of the musicians of the late nineteenth-century.[32] His current style reflects the approach of the early nineteenth-century French School. According to him, it is a bow-making style lost by the early twentieth Century Mirecourt bow-makers and others, such as Lamy and Sartory.[33] He won many prizes including a gold medal in Ottawa in 1984, a gold medal in Portland in 1986, and a second prize at the Ville de Paris Competition in 1991.[34] He first signed bows in 1984 as Jean GRUNBERGER à PARIS but since 2006, he signs only Jean GRUNBERGER. Early on, he also signed some bows with a J.GRUNBERGER brand.[35]

Figure 5.11: Cello bow by Jean Grunberger (copyright Tarisio archives)

[32] Millant and Raffin, *L'Archet,* II:363.
[33] Jean Grunberger, interview with the author, July 2010.
[34] Le Canu, *Les Luthiers Français, Les Archetiers Contemporains*, 33.
[35] Jean Grunberger, interview with the author, July 2010.

Upon graduating in 1978, Pascal Lauxerois shared a small workshop at Rue de Turin in Paris with Wilfred Akoune.[36] He later moved to Bordeaux to work with his father and settled in Grenoble in 1984. During his residence in Grenoble, Lauxerois started exporting a lot of bows to Japan, most of them gold-mounted. In 1988, as his career was advancing well, he moved to Lyon and a few years later to capital city of Paris. Unfortunately, his life ended abruptly on August 19, 1994 when he had a heart attack.[37] Following Ouchard's teaching, Pascal Lauxerois' bows became more elegant and round. He signed his bows: LAUXEROIS.[38]

Stéphane Tomachot was also a 1978 graduate. Originally, Tomachot intended to go to the United States to work in Peter Priers' shop in Salt Lake City but because he had to wait so long for his visa, instead he went to work for Monsieur Bodart in Marseilles. In June 1979, he was asked to work for Max Möller in Amsterdam; since his American visa had still not arrived, he accepted the job (the visa did finally arrive in October 1979, but it was too late for Tomachot to change his plans). After a year with Möller, Tomachot returned to Paris in September 1980 and the following year started working on his own from his small apartment. Not until 1983 did he move to a larger location in Paris, where he stayed until 2001. In 2001, he moved to the Provençal city of Cucuron, a half-hour north of Aix-en-Provence, where he currently resides. A winner of many prizes, he received two gold medals from the Violin Society of America (in 1982 and 1984), the Grand Prix at the Ville de Paris Competition in 1988, Meilleur Ouvrier de France in 1989

[36] Wilfred Akoune, interview with the author, July 2010.
[37] Pascal Lauxerrois was a family friend of the author.
[38] Le Canu, *Les Luthiers Français, Les Archetiers Contemporains*, 36.

and most importantly, he was named Maître d'Art by the French government in 1994.[39] His bow-making style is more influenced by the "round heads" than the "square" Peccatte model. Although he highly admires Persoit, Eury, and Peccatte, his style is closer to that of Voirin/Lamy. Joseph Alfred Lamy (1850-1919) worked at the Voirin workshop from 1876 until 1885, thus showing a similar approach to Voirin. From a performance aspect, Tomachot prefers the early nineteenth-century bow but with a Voirin approach.[40] He signs his bows S. Tomachot à Paris. A few were signed S. Tomachot in the early part of his life with a brand given by Phillipe Bodard.[41]

Figure 5.12: Violin bow by Stéphane Tomachot (private collection)

In 1979, only two students, Michel Jamonneau and Jacques Poullot, graduated from the Mirecourt School. Upon graduation, Bernard Ouchard arranged for Michel Jamonneau to enter the workshop of Taconnier in Bordeaux, but, unfortunately at the last minute, Taconnier changed his mind, which angered Ouchard. Therefore, Jampnneau had to find his own first job. In 1980, he started working for C. Joliet in Paris. He was not

[39] Le Canu, *Les Luthiers Français, Les Archetiers Contemporains*, 66.
[40] Stéphane Tomachot, interview with the author, July 2010.
[41] Stéphane Tomachot, interview with the author, July 2010.

only a bow-maker but also a violinist and managed to continue bow-making and performing for a long time. After his positions in La Rochelle and Nancy, he was employed in the Jacques Didier workshop starting in 1981 to 1984. In 1984, he returned to freelance bow-making until 1992 when he turned primarily to performance. In 1996, he returned to full-time bow-making and in 1999 settled in Nantes before moving to Ierja, Spain in 2006. Strongly influenced by the Ouchard School, his bow-making style is now based on the old nineteenth-century bows and he often makes copies from the old masters. He signs his bows: -jamonneau-. [42]

Figure 5.13: Violin bow by Michel Jamonneau (in the style of Peccatte)
(copyright Tarisio archives)

[42] Michel Jamonneau, interview with the author, November 2009.

After his graduation, Jacques Poullot joined the Claudot workshop in Dijon where he stayed until 1983. Currently, he is involved in exporting and particularly with the production of bows. He creates, along with his wife Monique Poullot-Sepien, about a hundred bows per year following the Sartory format. The bows are for sale in most countries. Although Poullot makes primarily modern bows, he was once asked to create Baroque bows for an entire orchestra and had to make twenty-five bows ready for the Church of Santa Cecilia in Rome. Since 2000, the Poullot family has been residing in Chamonix. Poullot received two second prizes in the Violin Society of America Competition in 1990 and, in 1996, placed fourth in the Ville de Paris Competition in 1992. He won the Dunhill Prix des Métiers d'art in 1998. He signs his bows: Jacques POULLOT.[43]

Figure 5.14: Cello bow by Jacques Poullot (copyright Tarisio archives)

The year 1980 marks the last graduation from Mirecourt with a class of multiple members consisting of Éric Grandchamps, Arnaud Suard, and Georges Tepho. Since Bernard Ouchard died in 1979, all studied during their last year with Roger Lotte. Éric

[43] Jacques Poullot, interview with the author, November 2009.

Grandchamps remembers saying farewell to Ouchard before his death. He had enjoyed a close relationship with him that included activities ranging from playing billiards to helping out during his illness. After his graduation from Mirecourt, Éric Grandchamps continued his training for another three years in Geneva in the shop of Bernard Bossert. There he also met jewelers and engravers and he tried to apply those skills to bow-making. In 1983, he moved to the Presqu'île de Crozon (near Brest) where he currently resides. Since 1986, most of his production has been exported to Japan. According to Grandchamps, his strongest influence comes from one single bow he saw for one hour. It was made by Pierre Simon (1808-1881) but seemed close to the style of bows from Joseph René Lafleur (1812-1874). As a hybrid between a Simon and a Lafleur, the bow could be described as a square-head model with a slightly rounder contour, perhaps influenced by the *col de cygne*. To this day, Grandchamps retains a vivid memory of this bow made by Pierre Simon.[44] Grandchamps won many prizes throughout his career, starting in 1986 with a gold medal and a jury prize at the Maurice Vieux Competition. In 1991, he received two silver medals at the Ville de Paris Competition and in 1994, a gold medal from the Meilleur Ouvrier de France. He won three gold medals (for violin, viola and cello bow) from the Violin Society of America. Grandchamps signs his bows: E. GRANDCHAMPS. [45]

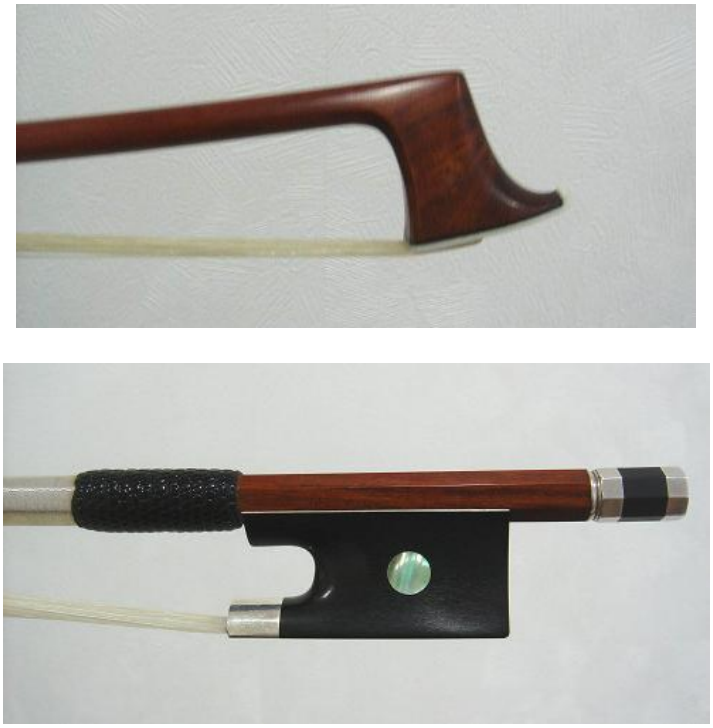
[44] Éric Grandchamps, interview with the author, November 2009.
[45] Le Canu, *Les Luthiers Français, Les Archetiers Contemporains*, 62.

Figure 5.15: Violin bow by Éric Grandchamps (private collection)

Also graduating in 1980, Arnaud Suard was placed in the Camurat workshop in Paris, where he stayed for two years until he moved to Amsterdam and the Max Möller workshop.[46] In 1983, he returned to Paris, this time opening his own shop along with his brother, Éric Suard, a violin-maker alumnus of the Mirecourt School. The brothers worked together for the next twelve years and relocated in 1999 to a workshop outside Paris. Arnaud Suard's bows are mostly influenced by the nineteenth-century bow-makers such as Dominique Peccatte, Nicolas Maire, and Pierre Simon.[47] A winner of a gold medal in Ottawa in 1984, he also received a second prize at the Ville de Paris Competition in 1991. Suard also earned a silver medal from Portland in 1985 and a silver medal from Manchester Competition in 1986. He signs his bows Arnaud SUARD à PARIS.[48]

[46] Le Canu, *Les Luthiers Français, Les Archetiers Contemporains*, 66.
[47] For more information, visit < http://www.arnaudsuard.com/>
[48] Le Canu, *Les Luthiers Français, Les Archetiers Contemporains*, 62.

Figure 5.16: Violin bow by Arnaud Suard (private collection)



The third bow-maker to graduate in 1980 was Georges Tepho. Upon receiving his degree, he joined Sylvie Masson (Mirecourt alumna, class of 1976) for a year, before moving to Quimper in 1982 to join J. L. Blivet's workshop.[49] Although he worked with Lotte during his last year, Georges Tepho had been highly influenced by Bernard Ouchard and retained a style similar to his. One could divide his bow-making into three periods: the first following the principles of Ouchard/Mirecourt, the second was influenced by Pierre Simon, and the last indebted to Pageot/Lafleur.[50] Such an evolution would point toward a Mirecourt style at first with Bernard Ouchard, to a less strict approach of the head through Simon and, finally, even more curves with Pageot/Lafleur. A winner of many prizes, he received a bronze medal at the 1989 Mittenwald

[49] Ibid., 64.
[50] Georges Tepho, interview with the author, October 2009.

Competition and a gold medal from the Violin Society of America in 1994. Tepho signs his bows: G. TEPHO.[51]

Figure 5.17: Violin bow by Georges Tepho (copyright Tarisio archives)

Marielle Gobin was the last student to graduate from the bow-making school in 1981. She only worked with Bernard Ouchard for a short time, and most of her training was with Lotte. Marielle Gobin was not available for an interview.[52]

Conclusion

For ten years, nineteen young bow-makers received a free education at the Lycée Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume in Mirecourt as well as hands-on learning experience from Bernard Ouchard, who may have been one of the last French bow-makers. Through the visionary concept of the French government to preserve its national musical heritage as well as the dedication of the Parisian *luthiers* and the Lycée Vuillaume in Mirecourt, the course of French bow-making history was altered from that of a dying branch of knowledge to one of participation in current globalization.

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[51] Le Canu, *Les Luthiers Français, Les Archetiers Contemporains*, 64.
[52] According to Sylvie Masson, Ms. Gobin has retired from the world of bow-making.

The bow's history originated in France, especially in the cities of Paris and Mirecourt. If the knowledge of French bow-making had not been advanced through the teaching of two to three new makers every year, for a period of ten years starting in 1971, the current globalization of French bow-making technique would probably not have taken place. Since 1950, the international organization known as the Entente Internationale des Luthiers et Archetiers is the most significant membership a violin and/or bow-maker can receive.[53] Members of EILA are now working in nineteen countries and these comprise one-hundred-seventy-four (174) members.[54] This clearly demonstrates the globalization of both violin and bow-making.

French bows are highly desired by many professional violinists and are in high demand. The nineteenth-century French bows are becoming harder to find since many have broken as a result of unfortunate accidents. The resurgence of the tradition at Mirecourt enabled French bows to develop in recognition of past historical models and to become available to performers.

After the death of Bernard Ouchard, the bow-making school closed its doors. Many of its former students petitioned to reopen the bow-making school but the project was abandoned. Instead, most of the graduates became teachers and communicated their knowledge to students.

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[53]The selection process includes many requirements. Members must be 35 years of age and have completed their studies in violin or bow-making with an approved firm or in a violin or bow-making trade institute. They must have pursued the profession of violin or bow-maker as a maker or restorer, or both, for at least five years with an approved master violin or bow-maker (i.e. five years after their apprenticeship) and they must legally carry on the trade of violin or bow-maker or be a master violin or bow-maker managing a firm of good repute, and must in each case be in constant and direct contact with the players.

[54] http://www.eila.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=58&Itemid=95

Bow-making, which started as a family business with the Tourte family, developed on the early nineteenth Century. Its conceptions were advanced by the Parisian shops in the early nineteenth century and embraced by string players. The ideas and techniques did not change to this day, although the knowledge was never written down. Instead, it was passed on from generation to generation, from one bow-maker to a student bow-maker, from one person to another. Although closing the Mirecourt bow-making classes was unfortunate in that it marked the end of an era, that event returned bow-making to its origins, with students learning in the backrooms of the bow-makers' shops.

The goal of the Mirecourt School was to save an art, the knowledge of bow-making, and the superior work of its graduates proves that the goal has been achieved. Now in the twenty-first century, in every corner of the world, it is possible to find a French-trained bow-maker.

Appendices

All interviews were conducted as telephone-interviews. No recordings were made. The interviews were in French but the author took notes in English during the conversations. Each interviewee was contacted by the author and asked whether he or she would accept to be interviewed for the purpose of this dissertation and then, upon approval, a day and time were set for the telephone interview. Appendixes A through O are transcripts of the author's conversations with fifteen bow-makers who studied with Bernard Ouchard at the Mirecourt School. The sixteenth interview, Appendix P, is with Louis Monnin, who worked with Ouchard at the Alfred and Pierre Vidoudez shop in Geneva.

Appendix A: Jean-Yves Matter, interview with the author, October 2009.

Appendix B: Benoît Rolland, interview with the author, July 2010.

Appendix C: Stéphane Müller, interview with the author, October 2009.

Appendix D: Wilfred Akoune, interview with the author, July 2010.

Appendix E: Martin Devillers, interview with the author, November 2009.

Appendix F: Gilles Duhaut, interview with the author, October 2009.

Appendix G: Sylvie Masson, interview with the author, October 2009.

Appendix H: Jean-Pascal Nehr, interview with the author, October 2009.

Appendix I: Christophe Schaeffer, interview with the author, October 2009.

Appendix J: Jean Grunberger, interview with the author, July 2010.

Appendix K: Stéphane Tomachot, interview with the author, July 2010.

Appendix L: Michel Jamonneau, interview with the author, October 2009.

Appendix M: Jacques Poullot, interview with the author, October 2009.

Appendix N: Éric Grandchamps, interview with the author, July 2010.

Appendix O: Georges Tepho, interview with the author, October 2009.

Appendix P: Louis Monnin, interview with the author, November 2009.

Appendix A

Jean-Yves Matter, interview with the author, October 2009.

Olivier Fluchaire: How did you find out about the Mirecourt School?

Jean-Yves Matter: Well, my father gave me a choice between going to the Mirecourt School or being unemployed! Nobody believes me, but really, this is the way it happened. Benoît Rolland and I were the first students at the school. My father, who was a professional musician, saw a newspaper article about violin-making.

O.F.: Did you play an instrument prior to coming to Mirecourt?

J.Y.M.: Yes, I played the oboe.

O.F.: Did you want to become a violin or bow-maker when you applied at the school?

J.Y.M.: I wanted to be a musician but my parents said no. My father realized that since I enjoyed taking everything apart (I would often open any electric machines found around the house) and wanted to be a musician, instrument-making was to be my vocation. When I auditioned for the Mirecourt School, Jacques Bauer and Étienne Vatelot told me that they had space for ten students, eight for violin-making and two for bow-making. At that point, Monsieur Bauer offered me a place in the bow-making class.

O.F.: Where did you come from?

J.Y.M.: Alsace.

O.F.: During the year, did you stay in the dormitories?

J.Y.M.: Yes, we had no choice.

O.F.: Did you go home often?

J.Y.M.: I only went during the vacation at Christmas and for Easter. When I first entered the school the principal was acting like a dictator. His name was Principal Pariente and he was from Corsica. He was running the school like it may have been a century ago, with

no free time and very little off campus time; essentially, a military-like boarding school. We could only go out for two hours on Wednesdays and two hours on Saturdays but this time off campus was often taken away for disciplinary reasons.

O.F.: While at the school, did you learn how to play a string instrument?

J.Y.M.: Yes, it was required. I started with the violin for a few months and then cello but at the end of my schooling, I wasn't playing any instruments. At the beginning, lessons were very badly organized. First, we had a local violin teacher from the music school, essentially an older female teacher who left me with bad memories of learning the violin. Soon after, due to our relentless complaining about her, the school found a way to arrange for lessons at the Nancy conservatory. Thus, every week we would go to Nancy. Unfortunately, it stopped quickly due to the financial problems of bringing us to the conservatory. Finally by my second years, they stopped having us take lessons and I never had to take a violin exam. I am guessing that in the later year, it may have been organized better.

O.F.: Do you remember your first meeting with Bernard Ouchard?

J.Y.M.: It must have been at the interview since he was present. But he didn't speak to me. Only the President of the *Luthiers,* Monsieur Bauer, would speak to us.

O.F.: How do you remember Bernard Ouchard as a person?

J.Y.M.: Benoît Rolland and I had a special connection with him. We were only two students that first year. We spent more time with him at a local *café* than at the school. On Wednesday afternoon, when we went outside of the school, it was to meet Professor Ouchard at the local *café*. We were able to be friendly with him prior to our second and third year. As soon as our second year started, everything changed.

O.F.: What kind of bow model did Ouchard teach you?

J.Y.M.: They were bows following his style. He was not interested in having us make different models.

O.F.: Do you remember your first bow?

J.Y.M.: Yes, I still have it. It was made during the end of the second year.

O.F.: In terms of dividing the three years, when did you learn how to make an entire bow?

J.Y.M.: The first year, we made sticks and frogs; by the end of the second year, we started mounting them together and by the third year, we were making bows after bows.

O.F.: But you didn't make adjusters?

J.Y.M.: Well, we made some to learn how to fabricate them but they arrived pre-made.

O.F.: Was Bernard Ouchard very strict?

J.Y.M.: He was a perfectionist and only liked quality work. His work was always very good and beautiful. His career speaks for itself. He was hard on us only to bring us to his level of perfection. He had a very paternal side, especially during the first year. We laughed a lot, talked a lot, and I often saw him as a father figure.

O.F.: Did he speak about the Indochina War?

J.Y.M.: Yes, especially during the first year. Once again, once the other students came along, everything changed. We lost the rapport of father to child which we had during the first year and it became a much more professional relationship.

O.F.: Did you know his wife and two children?

J.Y.M.: Only once or twice I saw his wife and maybe once one of his children.

O.F.: If you could turn the clock back, would you enter the school again?

J.Y.M.: It depends under which principal! After Monsieur Pariente came Principal Mathis. He was also very difficult. He was a former boxer who disciplined us a lot. Later, the third year, the principal was much better but I can't remember his name.

O.F.: Should the school reopen its bow-making class?

J.Y.M.: No. At one point, we spoke a lot about reopening the school, as recently as the year 2000. I think Benoît Rolland may have been approached to teach at the school. But really, nothing happened. Bow-makers have multiplied throughout the world now and there is no need to create more. With so many bow-makers (from as far as China) it could be dangerous for the future of bow-makers to have so many of them. It is not all that easy to sell a new bow! And let's not forget the wood problem. Since we cannot cut pernambuco anymore, what are the next generations going to use? Would we be training bow-makers who could not have a future due to the lack of wood?

O.F.: Do you make Baroque bows?

J.Y.M.: I made many Baroque bows during my years in Paris.

O.F.: How did your style evolve after the Ouchard training?

J.Y.M.: Voirin. I really liked that style but stopped making bows about 15 years ago. I now mostly repair and restore bows as well as violins. I learned how to make violins when I was in Canada and kept going while in Strasbourg.

O.F.: Could you tell me about your upbringing?

J.Y.M.: I was born in France in 1953 in the Alsace region. I joined the École de Lutherie in 1971 and following my graduation, started working for J. Camurat in Paris from 1974 until 1979. From 1979 to 1983, I moved to Strasbourg, 1984-1985 to Canada to become a Professor at the École de Lutherie de Québec, 1985-87 back to France, 1987-1997 Lisbon, and since 1997 I opened a shop in Porto [Portugal].

Appendix B

Benoît Rolland, interview with the author, July 2010

Olivier Fluchaire: How did you find out about the bow-making school in Mirecourt?

Benoît Rolland: Jean-Yves Matter and I were the first two students to enter the bow-making class. The school opened its doors in 1970 and I knew that in 71, Bernard Ouchard would teach bow-making there. When I was young, I learned the piano and later the violin. Being a violinist, I liked instruments, especially the bow.

O.F.: Were your parents musicians?

B.R.: My grandmother was a fine pianist but my parents were amateur musicians.

O.F.: Why become a bow-maker?

B.R.: The bow is a beautiful object both esthetically and mechanically. Furthermore, it can be turned into a jewel by changing ebony in tortoise-shell or changing the silver mountings to gold. It's a beautiful jewel. It was also as a violinist that I started enjoying the beauty of the bow.

O.F.: Where did you study violin? Did you ever take lessons with Mademoiselle Berger?

B.R.: I grew up in Paris and studied at the Versailles conservatory and later, the Paris conservatory. Since I played the violin at a high level, I was not required to take lessons with Mademoiselle Uguette Berger. Most of the students who entered the school had no musical background, a few played the guitar but they had rarely studied any instruments. But I sang in the choir.

O.F.: Did you stay in the dormitories?

B.R.: For the first two years, I stayed in the dormitories and then rented a small apartment.

O.F.: Do you remember your entrance audition to the school? Was Monsieur Ouchard present?

B.R.: The first time I met Monsieur Ouchard was in September 1971. At the auditions, I had a few tests as required by Monsieur Bauer at the time. But obviously, I had no competition since it was the very first year the bow-making classes would open.

O.F.: Who was Monsieur Bauer?

B.R.: The president of the "Groupement des Luthiers et Archetiers." He was not involved directly with the school since René Morizot was in charge at the school.

O.F.: Who was the principal during your days?

B.R.: It was Monsieur Pariente and, later, Monsieur Mathis. Monsieur Parients was very hard on us but Monsieur Mathis was a positive addition to the school.

O.F.: How did you learn how to make bows?

B.R.: During the first year, we made sticks only. We learned through his pedagogical approach. He learned with his grandfather and father and would pass his knowledge onto us following the twentieth-century tradition.

O.F.: Did you know his family?

B.R.: Yes, his wife was from Mirecourt and they had two children.

O.F.: From your point of view, why did Ouchard return to Mirecourt after his years in Geneva?

B.R.: I would think that he wanted to return to Mirecourt after twenty years abroad.

O.F.: Do you still have your first bow?

B.R.: Yes, I kept it.

O.F.: How about the materials to make the bows? Where did they come from?

B.R.: The first year, we had no wood. Charles Bazin came to help us by furnishing some blanks that he kept in his attic. This helped us at the beginning. Likewise, the school had no tools and we used tools given by the Gillet family. Eventually, Bernard Ouchard had some tools made for the school by Monsieur Moser who had made tools for Laberte and many others.

O.F.: What happened about finding wood after the first year?

B.R.: We received wood from many different sources. I think some came from Gillet and Dupuys.

O.F.: What about making frogs? Were the buttons and *passants* [rings] nickel-silver and pre-made?

B.R.: Yes they were but we often actually made the *passant*. Everything was mounted in *maillechot* [nickel-silver] except for my final few bows especially the one for my *Brevet de Technicien* [Technician's Certificate].

O.F.: What about the varnish?

B.R.: It was simple lack. Varnish does not really matter with bows. The idea is very simple: 250g of gum lack with 1 liter of alcohol.

O.F.: How many bows did you make in Mirecourt?

B.R.: Possibly three hundred. Maybe thirty at the school and then I would make bows in my room. Also, I was in Mirecourt for four years instead of three. My final year, I was employed by Monsieur Vatelot but made bows from Mirecourt under Monsieur Ouchard.

O.F.: How did the program change after the first year?

B.R.: From the second year, we were more students and our relationship with Monsieur Ouchard changed. The first year, he was more like a father figure but later, it was not possible to keep that rapport due to the many students.

O.F.: What were the pros and cons of the school?

B.R.: The pros were that Monsieur Ouchard saved the bow-making profession by teaching all of us. The cons may be that the school was under the French national education and therefore, we were in a regular high-school with a specialty but meanwhile, we had to also study all the regular subjects and we would have needed more time in the workshop.

O.F.: What did you have to do to graduate with the BT?

B.R.: We had to make a bow and take the regular French baccalauréat exam in French, physics, English, music, drawing and possibly physical education.

O.F.: Would you be in favor of reopening the bow-making class?

B.R.: We still need more bow-makers and I feel that the school should keep on teaching quality bow-making.

O.F.: How did your style evolve after studying with Monsieur Ouchard?

B.R.: My style is now more influenced by the older French masters such as Peccatte, Maire, and Tourte.

O.F.: In terms of your biography, after graduating, what did you do?

B.R.: First I worked for Monsieur Vatelot from Mirecourt, and later opened my own shop in Paris. Then, in 1982, I left to go to the Island of Bréhat. There I developed the first professional quality carbon fiber bow and a new generation of bows by replacing the pernambuco wood with carbon fiber and including a screwing mechanism that allowed the performer to adjust the cambering of the bow. Although this invention was very successful, I never stopped making pernambuco bows. In 2000 I created my thousandth pernambuco bow and in 2007, my twelve-hundredth bow.

O.F.: Did you write articles about bows?

B.R.: Yes, I wrote many of them and often give lectures as well.

O.F.: Did you receive prizes at competitions?

B.R.: Yes. I was named Best Artisan of France and was awarded a Médaille d'or du travaille in 1979 and in 1983, received a Diplôme National d'Archetier d'Art.

O.F.: Did the basic idea of carbon-fiber bows start during your stay in Bréhat?

B.R.: Yes, but I don't make them anymore.

O.F.: What kind of bows do you now make?

B.R.: My latest bows are called: signature. Essentially, the very best bows I can make. They require a lot of time to craft since the goal is to return to the playing characteristics of Peccatte and Tourte. The wood needs to be exquisite and only fifty percent of those bows end up as a finished signature.

O.F.: Do you still use Victor Fétique's wood?

B.R.: Sometimes I do but I also have my own wood.

O.F.: On a different subject, you have many wonderful pictures of the school on your web site. May I use some or would that be against the copyright?

B.R.: Sure, I don't think it would be a copyright issue to use pictures of the school. Should you want more pictures, Sylvie Masson has a lot of them.

Appendix C

Stéphane Müller, interview with the author, October 2009

Olivier Fluchaire: How did you find out about the Mirecourt School?

Stéphane Müller: While being a violin student at the Toulouse conservatory until the age of fifteen, I often visited the workshop of a semi-professional violin restorer named René Guiraud. He was himself a double bass player with the Capitol Orchestra in Toulouse who had studied in the Laberte workshop and helped the local players in Toulouse since no violin-makers or restorers lived in Toulouse during those days.

O.F.: Why become a bow-maker?

S.M.: When I applied for the Mirecourt School in 1971, I was assigned to bow-making. Somehow, the admitting committee felt that bow-making was a better assignment for me. It is a strange phenomenon how they decided whether one is to be a better bow-maker or violin-maker but I am happy they sent me to bow-making.

O.F.: Where did you live before entering the school?

S.M.: I was born in Nice but lived in Toulouse until Mirecourt.

O.F.: Where did you live while at the school?

S.M.: The *lutherie* school was housed within the Lycée Vuillaume and I stayed in the dormitories. During the first two years we were housed in large rooms with approximately twenty-five beds. In our last year, we were in smaller rooms with only eight students, all violin and bow-makers. All meals were served in the cafeteria with breakfast at 7 A.M., lunch at noon and dinner at 7 P.M.

O.F.: How many students were attending the school?

S.M.: During my years at the school, hundreds of students were attending the Lycée Vuillaume but in 1972, only five were studying violin-making and four, bow-making. By

1973, this class only had two violin-making and two bow-making students left (who finished their studies with me in 1975).

O.F.: Did you have any spare time while at the school?

S.M.: Some students lived nearby and therefore could commute during the holidays but I returned home every three months. My first year was the hardest, maybe due to the strictness of the military-like schooling. With the replacement of the former school's principal by Monsieur Pierre Mathis in 1973, the atmosphere became better, less military-like. We were allowed to go out on Wednesday afternoons for two hours and for three hours on Sunday. The rest of the time we were at the school. Classes started at 8 A.M., until 5 P.M., break from 5:00 to 6:00 P.M., homework from 6:00 to 7:00 P.M., dinner from 7:00 P.M., homework from 8:00 until 9:00 P.M. and lights out at 9:30 P.M.

O.F.: Did you have any extracurricular activities?

S.M.: We had to practice our instruments, but also formed a photo club

O.F.: Do you remember your first class with Bernard Ouchard?

S.M.: The first time I met him would have been in September 1971. But my beginning at the school was a little unusual since I had broken my arm and had a cast! The school's principal was furious and the *maître* [Monsieur Ouchard] asked me how I was planning to make bows with a broken arm! To say the truth (I guess I can now say it), I broke my cast so that I could take my arm out and work during the day. I would put the broken cast back on in the evening.

O.F.: How did Monsieur Ouchard teach?

S.M.: The *maître* had a good sense of humor. Instead of calling us by names, he called us by region. Since I was from Toulouse, he called me Toulouse. But looking back now, I realize what an important figure the maestro was to all of us. He was really a grand master of bow-making and all of us who graduated from the school have a picture of Bernard Ouchard on the walls of our workshops. He was not a great pedagogue but showed an incredible devotion to his students and the art of bow-making. His goal was

not to make us happy and he could be hard on us. He taught us the way he was taught by his father who was very rigid and only satisfied with perfection. He was a great critic of our work and could tell me: “Toulouse, if you keep working like this, you won’t be back next year” and “Good job Toulouse, I could not have done better.”

O.F.: How did he teach how to make bows? Did you try to copy the great masters of the nineteenth century?

S.M.: No. We were taught in the Mirecourt tradition within the first year, twenty hours in the workshop. Not until the third year did I make a full bow on my own. For the first two years we only carved sticks and made frogs, essentially learning how to create both entities separately. In terms of the style of bow-making, we were copying his bows from the late years when he worked at Vidoudez. Naturally, being young we also attempted to try different models and Ouchard would look at them and say: “I don’t like it but it’s well done and thus, I have nothing negative to say” but when he didn’t like it he would say: “I don’t like it and it’s badly done,” at which point the bow would be thrown in the garbage. We had to follow his model but he accepted differences as long as the result was good. On the other hand, he never said: “Toulouse, make whichever model you like.”

O.F: During the first two years you only made sticks and frogs?

S.M.: Yes, we only kept the perfect sticks and would throw everything else away. The first year, we mostly worked on bee-wood and from the second year, pernambuco. During the first year, we were only making octagonal bows and if it wasn’t perfect, it was thrown away. It was required that to move to the next step of bow-making, we had to have at least six sticks ready at all times which is not so easy. For example, when working on making a frog, we had to be able to make a ferrule perfectly before being able to move on. We were not allowed to use a magnifying glass but he was in order to verify our work. We really had to spend days and days making the perfect ferrule.

O.F.: How would you describe the curriculum?

S.M.: We spent twenty hours a week in the workshop and another twenty hours divided between math, English, French, physics, chemistry, drawing, and all the usual school required subjects and of course we had to practice.

O.F.: If you could turn the clock back, would you enter the school again?

S.M.: Yes, due to the principles of the school. It is so difficult to form bow-makers nowadays. I have trained some but it is difficult from a financial point of view. The Mirecourt School was free and therefore all who were accepted were able to attend. My family would not have been able to afford private schooling and the rental of an apartment for me to learn bow-making from a bow-maker.

O.F.: Should the school reopen its bow-making class?

S.M.: Yes, and I started to bring this idea to my colleagues in the early 1990's but many were against and we stopped this project. The general concern was that there are now enough bow-makers and no need to create a school for them. It's unfortunate but now that we have such a big problem with finding pernambuco, I wouldn't want to train bow-makers who may have a hard time finding wood in the future.

O.F.: Do you make Baroque bows?

S.M.: No. I tried but I'll leave that to those who specialize in that field.

O.F.: Compared to what you learned as a student in Mirecourt, how would you describe your current style of bow-making?

S.M.: Bernard Ouchard formed my hands [trained]. That was probably Mirecourt's learning technique. For the head, you would go somewhere else and follow your intuition. For me, it was by looking at the work of the great makers and gradually evolving especially during my first few years. If I could have a dream, I would like to go back in time to the workshop of Joseph Henry. Really, it's my favorite period, the Henry, Maire, Simon and Pajeot time.

O.F.: Any last thoughts about Monsieur Ouchard?

S.M.: Yes, let me tell you a funny story about him. When we were learning how to camber the bows, we were heating the stick and then cambering to the corner of the desk. Sometimes, Bernard Ouchard would walk in slowly while we were concentrating on cambering without burning or breaking the stick, and hit the desk with a large hammer. As a result, we would often break the stick, which Monsieur Ouchard found very funny. Obviously, we didn't find it very funny at the time, but nowadays, when cambering a stick, anything can happen around me; it will never disturb me.

O.F.: Where was Ouchard during the second World War?

S.M.: Ouchard was a member of the resistance during the second World War and then joined the army for the Indochina War. He often talked about it but I had no interest in his views.

O.F.: Could you recapitulate your biography for me?

S.M.: I was born in Nice, France on August 18, 1956. I studied violin in Toulouse at the Toulouse conservatory and later bow-making with Bernard Ouchard in Mirecourt from 1972. Upon graduating from the school, I worked for Jean Schmitt in Lyon from 1975-76 and in 1978 won a top prize from the Marcel Vatelot Foundation. This allowed me to travel to Brazil for a year to improve my knowledge of pernambuco. Upon my return to France, I opened my own workshop in 1984 in Toulouse. Since 1990, I started collaborating with Jean-Pascal Nehr [a Mirecourt graduate, class of 1957] also to create bows stamped Nehr-Müller.

Appendix D

Wilfred Akoune, interview with the author, July 2010

Olivier Fluchaire: How did you find out about the school?

Wilfred Akoune: I was searching for a way to run away from the neighborhood. I was growing up outside Paris in La Courneuve. Essentially, I was attracted by art and met a *luthier* through a friend of mine who played the cello. Through that, I heard about the school and applied on my own when I was thirteen. The entrance exams were general tests based on aptitude and manual abilities. At that time, Étienne Vatelot was involved with the entrance process and after the audition he introduced the two principal teachers, René Morizot for violin-making and Bernard Ouchard for bow-making. As soon as I met them, I knew to ask to study with Monsieur Ouchard and felt more comfortable with this elegant-looking man from Geneva.

O.F.: Did you or your parents play an instrument?

W.A.: Not at all. They had no interest in music. I was interested in art schools but my parents didn't like it. When I told them that I wanted to become a *luthier,* they understood that I wanted to make glasses [in French a *luthier,* instrument maker, and *lunettier*, optician, can sound similar].

O.F.: Did you study the violin with Mademoiselle Berger at the school?

W.A.: Not really. I quickly realized that it was not necessary to play the violin in order to make bows. Monsieur Ouchard didn't play and neither did his father or grandfather.

O.F.: How was Monsieur Ouchard's teaching?

W.A.: The most important thing I learned from Monsieur Ouchard was the understanding of the feeling in the wood: to be able to understand whether the wood may be best for a viola bow or cello bow, to feel its nervousness or softness, density versus rigidity. He often said to feel the bow. The other side of his teaching was to educate our visual

understanding, our eyes, in seeing the curves and shapes of the bow. The visual memory in bow-making is also very important.

O.F.: Would you say that Monsieur Ouchard's bows were pure Mirecourt style?

W.A.: Not really. Through his work in Geneva at Vidoudez, he mostly made gold mounted bows, often with tortoise shell, and I think that through the experience at Vidoudez, his bows were much more than that from Mirecourt.

O.F.: Did you stay in the dormitories?

W.A.: After my first year, I did not. As a result, I would often meet Monsieur Ouchard after school at the local bar called La Vosgienne where he would often tell great stories.

O.F.: Would you say that the school was a positive addition in your life?

W.A.: I learned a lot in bow-making. At the time, we were very few bow-makers. About thirty-five years ago, nobody knew anything about bow-making. Some in France may have been aware of violin-making but bow-making was an unknown art. For me, it was wonderful to learn how to handle these precious woods as well as gold, silver, tortoise shell to create a jewel called a bow. On the other hand, I don't have only good memories. It was difficult. The school was no vacation.

O.F.: Should the school reopen the bow-making class?

W.A.: Jean-Phillipe Cogniet is currently in charge of the school. The school has changed a lot and many of its students are older than we were. We were fourteen, fifteen when now most have at least received their high school degree. It's a very different school.

O.F.: Where did you go following your graduation?

W.A.: Every November, we celebrated the Festival of Saint-Cécile in Mirecourt. At that time, the *luthiers* would all come from Paris and abroad and Monsieur Ouchard would have us leave our best bow on our workbench so that they could see it. Since all of us had an assigned place at the shared workbench it was easy to tell who made which bow. It was generally our silver mounted bow, the one made for our BT. At that time, some

l*uthiers* may ask Ouchard about the bows and offer to take one of the graduates. In my case, Monsieur Ouchard called me by my nickname, "la Courneuve," and asked me whether I would go abroad and offered Amsterdam and the Möller workshop.

O.F.: So how long did you stay at Max Möller's?

W.A.: From 1975 until 1977. That's where I started to really understand what Ouchard was teaching. In Mirecourt, we never saw any beautiful bows but in Amsterdam, I was surrounded by beautiful bows.

O.F.: What happened after that?

W.A.: I returned to France, first to the La Courneuve. I would then go up and down the Rue de Rome to get work from the luthiers. From Sabatier to Boyer every Wednesday and Fridays, I'd stop at every shop. This lasted until I opened my own small store in 1978 at 15 Rue de Turin. The space was very small, 100 square feet, but it was Bernard Sabatier who had seen it and its location, in front of a bus stop, and the low price was ideal. Within the first year, I returned to Mirecourt to see Monsieur Ouchard; I was also in contact with Benoît Rolland, and that was when Pascal Lauxerois was searching for a workshop. I invited him to share my small space.

O.F.: So did Monsieur Lauxerois join you upon his graduation from Mirecourt?

W.A.: Yes, exactly. Three years later, he left to go to Bordeaux to see his family and then went to Grenoble. We had the same passion for beautiful bows and enjoyed thinking that each bow was meant for a selected individual.

O.F.: Until when did you stay at this location?

W.A.: Until 1982, when the shop was passed on to Christophe Depierre, who is now located at the Rue de Rome. At that time, I stopped making bows for various reasons and moved on to the sound and mixing of audio recording.

O.F.: When did you return to bow-making?

W.A.: About ten years later, in 1992, I slowly returned to bow-making and opened a shop in Paris where I stayed for a few years until I moved to a larger location in Paris. During that time, I mostly restored bows.

O.F.: Were you making bows during that time?

W.A.: Not until 1994 did I return to bow-making. It took making a good amount of bows to regain my skills. In 1995, I rented a stand at the Musicora fair to show my bows. This was my official return to bow-making.

O.F.: How did your bow-making evolve?

W.A.: I am especially influenced by the makers of the early nineteenth century.

O.F.: Did you ever enter a competition?

W.A.: No- I don't like them.

O.F.: Do you sign your bows?

W.A.: Rarely or sometimes, below the silver wire. Most people have never seen it.

O.F.: What does you stamp read?

W.A.: "Wilfred Akoune Paris". For some clients, I did sign bows at the regular place.

Appendix E

Martin Devillers, interview with the author, November 2009

Olivier Fluchaire: How did you choose to enter the Mirecourt School?

Martin Devillers: I was not very pleased with my high school, although I was a good student, and enjoyed creating small crafts with wood. I prepared to audition for the École Boulle in Paris (a design school) and was accepted. Since I was from Paris, it was a good match but then, by luck, I found out about the Mirecourt School. Since I already played the violin, I became very interested in their program and applied.

O.F.: Did you stay in the dormitories for the three years?

M. D.: Yes, I stayed in the dormitories for the three years. We didn't go out much, especially during the first year, only two hours on Wednesdays and a little during the weekend. It was a little strict with Principal Mathis.

O.F.: Do you remember your entrance exam?

M. D.: We were asked to compare some violins and I remember being asked to cut f-holes on a violin and cut the wood along a pre-drawn line. They also had some kind of psychological tests as well but I don't really remember them.

O.F.: Did Monsieur Ouchard speak during the entrance exams?

M. D.: No, he did not. As a general rule, he didn't speak much; he was somewhat shy. During my three years at the school, he stayed very quiet and reserved yet he was very warm once we entered his world. Outside school, we would meet him at La Vosgienne, where he spent a lot of time. To be honest, Mirecourt is a very small city with not much to do and meeting at the local bar was a good way to get to know him. In the classroom, he was reserved, and taught well, but to understand him, it was easier outside school. I also went to his house a few times. Behind his back, we called him Bébère!

O.F.: How was Ouchard's teaching?

M. D.: He was so reserved that we had to really ask for help in order to receive it. He would give us an assignment and we would see him only after completion. Essentially, we had to go to his desk and ask for advice in order to progress. We were unable to move to another task before the previous one was mastered. The very first thing he would teach was to plane the sticks, then make a square, followed by an octagon and this could easily last six months. Later, he would make us camber, work on head plates, metal fusing and finally frogs. Although he showed us how to make buttons, they arrived pre-made. They were pre-assembled, nickel mounted buttons with pins probably coming from Monsieur Jérôme's family store.

O.F.: How did your style of bow-making evolve after Ouchard?

M. D.: It is hard to say. After the school, we all had a very Mirecourt-like style. We made bows like Monsieur Ouchard. After the School, I left to go to Oregon where I stayed for eight years, first working with Paul Schuback and then as a self-employed bow-maker. During those days, my bows were very Mirecourt-influenced. Upon my return to Paris, I turned more to the Lamy/Voirin style.

O.F.: Do you see your education at the Mirecourt School as positive?

M. D.: Yes, I learned a lot and would return. It could be a good idea to reopen a bow-making class but it is unclear as to what stops it from happening. On the other hand, is it really needed now? The purpose of the school during my days was to create a new generation of bow-makers; now do we really need to make even more?

O.F.: Did you ever make Baroque bows?

M. D.: Not really.

O.F.: Anything else you would like to tell me?

M. D.: I was able to work for Monsieur Ouchard and make, for example, an ivory frog for a Bernard Deliège bow and since his vision was becoming weak, he often asked me to help him with ivory work. He would also give me a little money for my work that helped. But I was somewhat surprised by the way he worked for the big Parisian shop. I would

often bring his bows for him to the Parisian shop and I was a little shocked by the financial side in each transaction since Monsieur Ouchard was paid very little for his work.

O.F.: Tell me a little about yourself from your childhood to your current position

M.D.: I was born on August 10, 1956 in Paris, France and trained at the school of bow-making in Mirecourt under Bernard Ouchard, graduating in 1976. After graduation, I moved to Portland, OR to work in Paul Schuback's shop. Paul Schuback was much older than me but had studied violin-making in Germany and bow-making in Mirecourt with the Morizot family. In 1984, I returned to France and started working with Stéphane Tomachot [also a graduate of the Mirecourt School, class of 1978] before opening my own shop in Paris in 1986, then in Toulon in 1988, and finally settled in the Grenoble region since 1989.

Appendix F

Gilles Duhaut, interview with the author, October 2009

Olivier Fluchaire: Why did you choose to apply to the Mirecourt School?

Gilles Duhaut: I was 16 and I wasn't sure what to do. Jewelry-making interested me but the teachers in my high school mentioned the Mirecourt School. As a result, I applied. I knew nothing of bow-making. At the interview, I was asked to compare two violins and some bows. Somehow I spoke a lot about the bows, although I had never seen any before that day. We also had a manual test.

O.F.: What was the difference between the bows and violins showed at the interviews?

G.D.: There were two violins, one a Stradivarius model and the other, a Guarneri Del Gesù, and two or three-bows, one was round, the other octagonal, one had a round heel and the other square heel, one had a Parisian eye, one had a plain button and the other a three piece adjuster etc. I come from Strasbourg and the move was easy since it was not far. René Morizot would handle the violin-making and Bernard Ouchard, the bow-making class. It was when I first met Monsieur Ouchard whom I respect very much. At first, I didn't speak to many people but later, I realized that I could use my hands well and it freed me to speak, I can now say that my hands gave me speech. Bernard Ouchard quickly immersed me in his universe and became somewhat of a father figure. I really enjoyed my three years with him- he changed my life for the better by opening my eyes to this passion. After the school in '76, I went to work in Paris at Camurat for nearly a year, to replace Jean-Yves Matter who had hurt his hands, and there I learned about restoring and re-hairing bows the Parisian way. After ten months, it really helped me, especially handling the bows of Patrice Fontanarosa or Frédéric Lodéon. But after all that, in 1977, I returned to Mirecourt to work for Ouchard for nearly a year. The son of Jean Bauer had a company called the Sofraluth where he made student instruments [made by machine and finished by hand] and they were sold mostly in France. The Director was Jacques Bauer, the son of Jean Bauer. While working for Jacques Bauer, I also helped

with Jean Bauer's bows. But while working for the Sofraluth, the Mirecourt School allowed me to use the workshop so that I could also work with Bernard Ouchard.

O.F.: So. Was it you who helped Ouchard with the buttons he bought from the Jérôme family?

G.D.: Yes, for example, I often would redo the button for him but also I'd help him with his work since he had difficulties by that time. By 1977, he already started being sick and I would help him with his bows after hours. He had so many problems with his health and his wife.

O.F.: Talking about his private life, he was married and had two sons. What kind of relationship did he have with his wife?

G.D.: They did not get along very well. When they came back to Mirecourt, it was after having spent twenty years in Geneva at the Vidoudez shop. He met her in Geneva; she was Swiss. But one has to look at the problems in relation to his childhood. His father, Émile Auguste Ouchard and mother had four children: Anne-Marie the eldest, then Bernard, Colette and Jean-Claude, and Bernard Ouchard had two sons. Both had no interest in music; one was a plumber and the other son, I don't remember. His eldest son was somewhat problematic since his friends were a bad influence and his relationship with his wife was not good. Maybe it has also something to do with Bernard's mother who had a depressive disorder and attempted suicide a few times which also explains the reason why Émile Auguste left for America. E. A. Ouchard left Mirecourt in 1946 to move to Paris but he quickly moved to New York with his girlfriend (he officially divorced his wife about ten years later in 1963). There is a movie of him having a picnic in New York's Central Park with René Morel and his friends. He always said that his son Bernard was more gifted with bow-making than he was.

O.F.: But Bernard Ouchard felt the opposite!

G.D.: Exactly, he always looked up to his father. E.A. Ouchard stayed in New York for twelve years before returning to France, where in Batavia, he attempted to commit suicide by jumping out of the window. It was his turn to be depressive and that was the

reason for returning to France. It was probably in 1960. But while in France, he kept mailing his bows to Wurlitzer in New York. His daughter Colette explains that in the bus he took to mail the bows to America, he met a woman and finished his life with her. The entire family can be traced back from Bernard Ouchard, to his father, E.A. Ouchard, to his grandfather, Émile François Ouchard born in 1872, to his great grandmother. His great-grandmother was a cleaning lady, serving in a noble's house in Mirecourt, who became a mother without marrying. As a result, the name Ouchard comes from his great-grandmother. His great-grandmother's father may have been a winemaker and his mother a dressmaker in Mirecourt, sometime around 1800.

O.F.: What happened to E. A. Ouchard's wife after he moved to New York?

G.D.: She stayed in the house in Mirecourt. It was a difficult time for the family and Bernard Ouchard. He didn't know where to get work and couldn't rely on his mother. Following his father's move to New York, six month later, Bernard Ouchard entered the military service to serve in the Indochina War, probably as a last recourse. He was a nationalist, and Gaullist, and probably believed in the war. He told us about the war. It was a very difficult time for him with night raids and surprise commandos attacking them and of course his personal family saga was still present in his mind. Furthermore, he started drinking a lot and probably smoking more than just cigarettes, as is typical of most wars. He stayed for two years and upon his return, the war came back with him. He returned to Mirecourt in 1948 but without any more work than before. He went to work for his uncle François Lotte and his cousin Roger Lotte for a few months before François Lotte sent him to Vidoudez in Geneva. He arrived in Geneva at the end of the year of 1948, and he stayed for twenty-two years until his return to Mirecourt in 1971. Originally, he had no plans to stay in Geneva for that long but he worked very well at the beginning although he could not organize himself. When he first arrived, he stayed with Monsieur Louis Monnin, who also worked at Vidoudez. Although Ouchard worked very well and his bows were beautiful, he didn't know how to cook or get dressed and kept asking his friends about everything since he was incapable of making his own mind. Unfortunately, they must have made a mistake recommending his wife to him! He married his wife in 1952. Vidoudez would bring him to concerts every week and show

him around but his wife had no interest in it. She was very pretty but always dressed very extravagantly and enjoyed showing off. She had no interest in music or in the life of Bernard. As long as she could count on her friends in Geneva, all was fine but upon their move to Mirecourt, life turned worse for her. Bernard Ouchard must have been happy to return to Mirecourt but his wife had no interest in the small city. She kept going back and forth between Mirecourt and Geneva. During the weekend, on Sundays, Martin Devillers and I would often eat lunch in Bernard Ouchard's house. The first time, his wife was somewhat nice, but most of the time she wasn't there. Instead Bernard Ouchard would make a simple pasta for us. I remember once when she hid all the knives, forks, and plates and therefore we had nothing with which to eat our food! This shows well how the Ouchard marriage was. As a result, he retuned to his Indochina times and drinking habits. By 1972, he drank a lot and the doctors started telling him to watch out.

O.F.: What did he die from?

G.D.: I think a cancer, probably a liver cancer. He had a difficult life. As long as his father was around, Bernard Ouchard was fine in Mirecourt but upon his departure, he was left with his mother who had depression.

O.F.: From where did Ouchard get his tools?

G.D.: No, we don't know where E. A. Ouchard's tools are. All of Bernard Ouchard's tools were from his days in Switzerland. He had beautiful tools, with the Swiss perfection that he brought with him to Mirecourt.

O.F.: What about E.A. Ouchard's wood?

G.D.: He probably had very little left. E A Ouchard was a rich man during his earlier life but had a very modest last few years. When he returned, he would still mail bows to Wurlitzer.

O.F.: Did you have a nickname?

G.D.: He didn't call me Gilles; He often gave us a surname, and he called me Blâmont, because I came from a village called Blâmont. We called him the Béb or Bébère; Béb

was his name a little later, around the years of Jean-Pascal Nehr. But of course, we always called him: maître.

O.F.: Did you stay in the dormitories?

G.D.: Yes, for the three years. At first, we were often with the other students but quickly were given a room (for the bow and violin-makers) where we could be alone. Principal Mathis had allowed us to get that room.

O.F.: What about Bernard Ouchard's teaching style?

G.D.: Being a teacher myself, I know how difficult it is to create a curriculum and stick to it. I am planning to open a bow-making school next year in Tours. Since nobody talks about reopening the Mirecourt School, I have decided to open my own, in Tours. But returning to Ouchard, he had no interest in having us make a Tourte or Peccatte copy. While in Geneva, he was always unhappy to restore an old bow, even a Tourte or Peccatte. In his mind, players should instead play on new bows. Do not forget that at the time, prices for bows were not as expensive as they are now. He hated restoring old bows and often complained about it to his friend, Monsieur Monnin. His teaching was the way he was taught in Mirecourt, by his father. At first, plane many sticks until we finally understood how to do it, and then repeat every single action until it became natural to us. I remember the first cambering I did. It was with a cello bow and at the time we cambered with a char-grilled heater, and the first one I ever did, he said: "Who did this? It wasn't you!" Somehow, it must have been beginner's luck! As a result, in the Bruno Monsaingeon movie, I was filmed while cambering a bow. I sometimes helped Ouchard with cambering and other students would also take care of small jobs.

O.F.: How were the final years at Vidoudez?

G.D.: Bernard Ouchard was refusing to do a lot of the required work, such as restoring and re-hairing, and Vidoudez was becoming upset at him. Most likely, the Mirecourt offer came at the right time.

O.F.: Did you play an instrument before entering the school?

G.D.: Not at all. I started learning at the school from the local teacher. She was very "old school" in teaching to play with both elbows against the body; her name was Uguette Berger (we called her Guéguette). Just like we enjoyed calling Bernard Ouchard behind his back: Bébère. Obviously, we called him: *Maître* in class. He always smoked his cigarettes during class. I was in class with Martin Devillers and Sylvie Masson and really, he wasn't nice to Sylvie. Unfortunately, Ouchard was a misogynist and gave Sylvie a very hard time. It was one of the very negative sides of Ouchard, maybe as a result of his family upbringing and his mother.

O.F.: What about your personal style? How has it changed following Ouchard's training?

G.D.: After my years with Ouchard I had to serve in the French military service. Following that time, I went to work in Metz at Paul Didier's shop. During those days, I restored a lot of bows as well as violins. And the history of Mirecourt was important to me especially following Ouchard's death in 1979. It is the place where I grew up, met Ouchard etc. and as a result, in 1982, I moved back to Mirecourt. I was also thinking about trying to reopen the bow-making course at the school to keep on sharing the knowledge of bow-making. I was so fortunate to have received my formation for free through the French schools instead of privately; I wanted to pass it on. In Mirecourt, I quickly had financial problems since Mirecourt has no orchestra and few musicians; I had to move around Nancy and Metz. But since I was twenty-five years old, I was asked to come and show my work in Japan. This started a long-term relationship with Japan but also America and I turned towards the international market. Although I wanted to reopen the school, there was too much red tape and I was unable to do it. On the other hand, after only six months of living in Mirecourt I was soon asked to take a student into my workshop, and I did. It was Pierre Guillaume who is now in Brussels. Since those days, I have taught more than forty students. I had a very hard time moving away from the Ouchard style. In 1982, my bows still looked like Ouchard's. It took me until 1989 to move ahead. At the time, I would see Bernard Millant in Mirecourt during his visits to his hometown of Mirecourt. He was nice to me because I returned to Mirecourt. He respected that and always came to see me during his visit. It's interesting since in the old days, when Monsieur Vatelot opened the school, Monsieur Millant was not very supportive.

After 1989, I became most interested in the Pageot school, and it influences my style to this day.

O.F.: Did you create Baroque bows?

G.D.: Only a few, but I have also created new bows, like Gilles Nehr's *téte-bêche* model but using different materials. Although I still make traditional modern bows, I also look at futuristic ideas using today's technology.

O.F.: Would I be right in saying that your life centered around Mirecourt?

G.D.: I was born in 1957 in Cirey-sur-Velouze [Northeastern France] and trained in Mirecourt with Bernard Ouchard from 1973-76. I worked for a year for Jean Camurat upon his graduation and in 1977, returned to Mirecourt for a year to work at the Sofraluth [Société Française de Lutherie]. In 1979, I left to work for Paul Didier and, since 1982, I live in Mirecourt.

Appendix G

Sylvie Masson, interview with the author, October 2009

Olivier Fluchaire: How did you find out about the Mirecourt School?

Sylvie Masson: My father was a cellist in the Paris Orchestra and decided to take a family vacation in Alsace. Since we lived in Paris, Mirecourt was on the way to Alsace. He had always wanted to visit that city famous for its instruments and, therefore, we all went on the way to Alsace. We visited a violin-maker as well as a bow-maker in Mirecourt and the bow-maker made a strong impression on me. Following this trip, I decided to become a bow-maker. Prior to that, I wanted to be a photographer.

O.F.: Did you play an instrument?

S.M.: No, I played a little piano but really, I didn't play an instrument.

O.F.: How did the dormitories work for girls?

S.M.: There were two separate buildings, the boys in one building and the girls in another. The girls' dormitories were with about thirty beds but a short wall divided each group of five. The wall didn't go all the way to the ceiling but created some separation. It was still very loud.

O.F.: In the group of five beds, were they reserved for five bow or violin-making students?

S.M.: In my class, I was the only female bow-maker but from the same year, there were two more girls for violin-making and the three of us were together. The other two girls in our group of five beds had nothing to do with instrument-making. As a matter of fact, I am the bow-maker who created the feminine term for bow-maker [in French, nouns can either be masculine or feminine according to their meaning; as a result: *archetier* for men, *archetière* for female]. Bernard Ouchard was very misogynous and he didn't want

me to be a student at the beginning. There were women who had done some small repairs on bows but I was the first woman to create a bow from A to Z.

O.F.: How did Bernard Ouchard handle this situation?

S.M.: It was very difficult. At the beginning, he wanted nothing to do with me. I later found out that while taking the entrance test, he didn't want to accept me, simply because I was a woman. Since the entrance tests were anonymous, they had no choice but to let me take them and the other faculty explained to him that he could not dismiss me simply because I was a woman. My father, as a member of the Orchestre de Paris, knew all the dealers and he found out what was happening. Since I was fifteen when I entered the school, it made my life very difficult, but it also made me strong as a woman. From the start he would say "vous" to me instead of "tu" to the boys and he sat me across from him, at his desk, and never spoke to me for the first three weeks. He would explain the strict minimum.

O.F.: How were people arranged in the class?

S.M.: All new students were seated at a desk across from an older student, facing each other. This way the new students could learn from the older, more experienced ones. Also, they were able to ask their seniors for advice. We only brought the finished work to Monsieur Ouchard. But me, he didn't tell me anything. When he looked at me working, and if I raised my eyes, he would look away. As a result, I was behind in my learning until the day Benoît Rolland offered to help me. At first Ouchard didn't like that Benoît was helping me but I said to him: "But Maestro, you don't explain anything to me but Benoît does." After I stood up once to ask Benoît for help, I never had to do it again and finally he started to accept me. The irony of the story is that the very last person to ever graduate from the school was also a woman, Marielle Gobin. Obviously she mostly studied with Roger Lotte since Ouchard died during her first year.

O.F.: Did the other two female students who studied violin-making have the same problem that you did with Monsieur Ouchard?

S.M.: No. Monsieur Morizot was different from Ouchard. They were friends but with very different characters.

O.F.: What about the meals? Did you eat with the boys?

S.M.: No. Everything was separate, in a different building, even meals.

O.F.: So the only contact you had with the rest of the bow-makers was in the workshop?

S.M.: Yes but also during the general subject classes.

O.F.: During the holidays, did you return to Paris?

S.M.: Yes, every six weeks, we all went home.

O.F.: How did Ouchard teach you how to make a bow?

S.M.: He would teach by example. He would show, generally twice, how to do a certain part of the bow and then he'd say: "do you understand" and if you didn't he would show a third time. By the third time, he would say: "Well now that's it, you must have understood." That's when we would generally turn for help to the senior students in the class.

O.F.: How many tables were in the workshop?

S.M.: The first year we were all in one room but by my second year, it was divided into two rooms. In 1973, my workshop was located in what was called L'École Normale but in 1974, the workshop moved to another building called the Vieux Lycée. As a result, the entire school of bow-making and violin-making was now in the Vieux Lycée where the boys' dormitories where also located. The picture of the Mirecourt workshop in the Vatelot book shows the École Normale workshop.

O.F.: If you could turn the clock back, would you enter the school again?

S.M.: Yes.

O.F.: Should the school reopen its bow-making class?

S.M.: Yes, I would like to see the school reopen.

O.F.: Do you also make Baroque bows?

S.M.: Yes, many Baroque but also Classical and modern bows.

O.F.: How did your style of bow-making evolve after having studied with Ouchard?

S.M.: After school, my style was influenced by the bows I saw. At the school we didn't get to see any old bows but we were lucky to have a very good teacher who knew how to work and craft some very talented makers. All of us had to search for our own style but I agree with the Ouchard training in copying his style. It was hard but created good makers. Why make the learning process different? Currently I mostly make Baroque bows, some Classical and a few moderns but I am now better known for my repairs and re-hairs. Many may find it strange but I enjoy re-hairing bows when most bow-makers don't enjoy it.

O.F.: Bernard Ouchard spoke a lot about the Indochina War and clearly enjoyed drinking beer. Was he an alcoholic?

S.M.: He was never drunk at the school, except for once. He had met a friend of his from Geneva, where he worked for twenty-two years, and they clearly celebrated the lunch and although he had no problems walking, his physical movements were much less controlled. Eventually, his drinking problem probably brought him to his grave. When we were finally allowed to go off campus, we would find him at the [Café] Vosgienne enjoying a few beers. But while teaching, he was never under the influence.

O.F.: So. It was no secret that he had an alcoholism problem?

S.M.: No, it was very clear, even physically, one could tell he was an alcoholic. We were told that he died from a cancer but obviously I wasn't at school by that time.

O.F.: Anything else you might want to tell me about Monsieur Ouchard and the school?

S.M.: Ouchard was no pedagogue. With the current style of teaching students today, none would be able to understand the strictness of Ouchard. We received a training more than

a lesson, the same as he received from his father when he was thirteen years old. His teaching was also proven in 1985 when at the VSA competition, the French makers won 85% of all the prizes, including all the gold medals. He was hard on us and especially on me. Many of us would often cry but he somehow created and transmitted quality through his teaching. Ouchard never had his own shop and grew up with family problems, especially the divorce of his parents. In the 1940s, a divorce in the city of Mirecourt was very unusual and it would have been difficult on him.

O.F.: Why do you think Ouchard took the job in Mirecourt when he may have been happy in Geneva?

S.M.: He was happy in Geneva and received good pay for his job. It was the Parisians who convinced him to come back to Mirecourt. At first he didn't want to go. Financially, his position was only a half time (twenty hours per week) and to help, the Parisian dealers such as Vatelot and Bauer offered to sell his bows. Somehow they agreed to sell a certain number of bows per month in order to help with his salary. As a result, Ouchard would work at the school in the morning, making bows for them to sell. Ouchard had nothing, no wood nor tools since his father had taken all of it to America in New York. The Parisian dealers would give him the wood and the wood to carve the bows using the school's tools.

Appendix H

Jean-Pascal Nehr, interview with the author, October 2009

Olivier Fluchaire.: How did you find out about the Mirecourt School?

Jean-Pascal Nehr: I was in Aix-en-Provence and my school advisor mentioned to me that a new school of violin-making just opened in Mirecourt. I played a little classical guitar but found instrument-making interesting and found out more about it. While interviewing at the school, I met some of the students who advised me to ask for bow-making instead of violin-making. As a result, I applied for both violin-making and bow-making.

O.F.: Were you staying in the dormitories?

JPN: Yes, we didn't have a choice.

O.F.: While at the school, did you have any special activities?

JPN: I had rented a very small house near the Madon River and would go as often as possible to relax and play music. My mother had moved to Paris the year prior to my entering the school and I would generally see her during the holidays.

O.F.: Do you remember your first class with Bernard Ouchard?

JPN: In September. He was passionate about well done work but had a difficult life. Clearly the Indochina War where he had served had marked him a lot. He often spoke about the war or sang songs. He was a good teacher but sometimes very cold. The first year, he often made me cry and he was hard on us and strict. Later, he would allow some freedom in our work but always required high quality. At the beginning, we were to copy his style of bow-making and had no interest in making Peccatte-like bows.

O.F.: Do you remember your first bow?

JPN: It was made at the end of two years after having made many sticks and frogs. We didn't make buttons. Later, all the bows were sold to dealers. There was a lottery at the end of the year to decide which bows would be sold to whom.

O.F.: So. Didn't you make your own bow until the third year?

JPN: Yes, that's right. The first year we made sticks, then frogs, then started mounting frogs on sticks and finally the third year, made a full bow.

O.F.: These ten years of Ouchard's teaching were important years for French bow-making. Do you agree?

JPN: Yes! Incredibly so. Just this last June, Stéphane Müller and I went to Mirecourt to make a bow together. We made a copy of a Bernard Ouchard bow. We have made about fifteen bows together.

O.F.: When taking the regular curriculum classes at the Lycée Vuillaume, were you with all the other students or were those classes only for the bow and violin-making classes?

JPN: These classes were with all the other students from every section of the Lycée.

O.F.: If you could turn the clock back, would you enter the school again?

JPN: Yes, of course. It was perfect to be taken into the world of instrument-making, away from all other distractions. At the time, there were still some retired makers who would give us their tools and some wood. And the old-timers would speak to us about their experience and life as a turn of the twentieth century instrument maker.

O.F.: Should the school reopen its bow-making class?

JPN: Yes, I have always wanted to see it reopen. It was free and those without the musical or instrument-making family background were able to learn. I have trained two people during my lifetime, my cousin and half-brother.

O.F.: Compared to what you learned as a student in Mirecourt, how would you describe your current style of bow-making?

JPN: After Ouchard, I worked a lot based on the Voirin concept until 1995-97. But I must also say that I suddenly felt a great deal of freedom upon the death of the maître. In many ways, I felt as if he were still criticizing my work during his life as if I still had to prove myself to him. After Voirin, I started restoring older bows and made a lot of Tourte copies. I am now especially interested in the Tourte bows, probably as a result of my collaboration with Paul Childs.

O.F.: It has come to my attention that most of you refer to Monsieur Ouchard as the maître (Maestro). But he was your professor, why call him maître?

JPN: When we called him maître he would say "there are no meters, only centimeters" (in French maître can also mean meter). He had a good sense of humor. It was out of pure respect for him.

O.F.: Do you make Baroque bows?

JPN: No, I have only made three in my life.

O.F.: Anything else you would like to mention about Ouchard?

JPN: Bernard Ouchard had another side as a person. He drank a lot; he was probably an alcoholic. Although it did not affect his work at the Lycée, it is a part of who he was. Could this problem have been tied to his war memories? Probably. But he married and had two sons who had moved with him from Switzerland to Mirecourt.

O.F.: Why do you think he returned from Switzerland to Mirecourt?

JPN: It was probably due to some pressure from Étienne Vatelot or somebody else. I don't really think he wanted to return to Mirecourt.

O.F.: Could you give me a short biography?

JPN: I was born in 1957 in Oran, Algeria and moved to Aix-en-Provence at the age of eight. In 1973, the family moved to Paris and I entered the Mirecourt School to study with Bernard Ouchard the following year. Upon graduating in 1977, I worked for many

Parisian workshops such as Sabatier, Lanne, Camurat and Chancereul, and, in 1987, moved to Marseilles to work for Hommel. In 1990, I opened my own store in Marseilles.

Appendix I

Christophe Schaeffer, interview with the author, October 2009

Olivier Fluchaire: When were you born?

Christophe Schaeffer: I was born in 1958 in Le Mans and grew up in the Southeast of France.

O.F.: How did you become interested in instrument making?

C.S.: I played the violin but did not enjoy school. My parents thought that since I played the violin and liked using my hands, violin-making could be good for me. As a violin student at the Romans Conservatory [near Valence], I knew the violin-maker Jean-Yves Rouveyre who put me in contact with the Mirecourt School.

O.F.: Could you tell me about the entrance exam at the Mirecourt School?

C.S.: One of the exams was to compare some violins and a bow; essentially, describe their differences in model. Then we had to carve with a knife the corner of a violin as well as draw a violin, which is not easy. Like everybody else, I wanted to be a violin-maker and didn't even know about the bow-making school. They were accepting three or four in violin-making and three in bow-making. To put it in simple terms, those who were not accepted as violin-makers were offered bow-making.

O.F.: While at the school, did you stay in the dormitories?

C.S.: Yes I did for the entire time. Every two weeks, I would come back to take my violin lessons. As a result, I was also able to see my family every two weeks. Principal Mathis allowed me to miss Monday's class every two weeks due to the train schedule. He was a good man and understood special needs for students. The first two years, I had Principal Mathis and in my final year, Principal Converset.

O.F.: How do you remember Monsieur Ouchard's teaching?

C.S.: He was distant. You had to be one of his favorites to receive a little warmth. He was very strict, old school, timid and quiet, holding his own pain quietly, the pain from his family. But he was an extraordinary man.

O.F.: Following the school, how did your bow-making style evolve?

C.S.: For a long time, I stayed under the Ouchard influence. I worked for Monsieur Dupuy right after the school and was left alone very quickly. Monsieur Dupuy was Eugène Sartory's grandson and I had the privilege of having access to Sartory's wood. When Monsieur Ouchard bought wood from Dupuy, it was Sartory's wood. I would often bring it to him and return with the finished bows. Monsieur Ouchard had very little wood but Stéphane Müller recently bought the leftover Ouchard wood. There wasn't much, maybe enough for about fifty bows. Philippe Dupuy would have Ouchard make bows for him and he would pay him partly with wood since Ouchard had so little. Therefore, during that period, from my second year, Ouchard's wood was from Gillet and Sartory's wood. My father gave me some money, since my education was free. He gave me whatever my siblings' education had cost him. With that money, I met Monsieur Dupuy and bought a violin from him. To pay for the violin, I used my parents' money and then made bows for Monsieur Dupuy. In many ways, all this happened thanks to Monsieur Ouchard. Eventually my style was greatly influenced by Sartory, especially thanks to Philippe Dupuy's collection of late Sartory's.

O.F.: How did you see Monsieur Ouchard's relationship with his wife?

C.S.: She was unhappy in Mirecourt and their relationship was not very good. I barely knew his children, but Bernard Ouchard drank a lot and it seems to be a family trademark. His sons were both in the construction business.

O.F.: Do you remember your first bow?

C.S.: Yes, I still have it. It was made in the middle of my second year.

O.F.: Should you be fifteen years old a second time, would you re-enter the Mirecourt School?

C.S.: Yes, of course but as a bow-maker.

O.F.: Do you still have a copy of the Bruno Monsaingeon movie?

C.S.: Yes, I do. I received it from him. He still makes a lot of movies. It's a 1978-79 wonderful movie. In the movie, Vatelot speaks about old bows such as Tourte, Voirin, etc., and Ouchard was not happy about it, since he only liked new bows. He even disliked Sartory.

O.F.: In your thinking, would it be a good idea to reopen the bow-making class in Mirecourt?

C.S.: No, I am against. Ouchard was a real master who trained eighteen very fine bow-makers. The current generation is different and should they go into bow-making, they will have a major wood problem. Currently, half of the bow-makers make a good living and the other [half] are only surviving.

O.F.: Did you ever make Baroque bows?

C.S.: No, never.

Appendix J

Jean Grunberger, interview with the author, July 2010

Olivier Fluchaire: How did you first find out about the Mirecourt School?

Jean Grunberger: My father gave me the idea. I played the flute and cello at the time but also enjoyed fixing things; anything manual was attractive to me. I saw a television special about Paul Tortelier and found music more and more fascinating. We all played music at home although they were not professional musicians. My father played the clarinet and my mother sang. We lived outside Paris, near Versailles.

O.F.: So, did you do research about the school before applying?

J.G.: Yes, I went to the CIDJ [Information et Documentation Jeunesse (Information and Documentation Center for Youth)] and did research about the school. Obviously, at the time, I meant to become an instrument-maker; I had no idea about bow-making. I applied to the school but before the entrance audition, I met the students and found out about bow-making at that time. As a result I applied for both violin and bow-making.

O.F.: Do you remember your entrance audition?

J.G.: Surely; we had a meeting with the music teacher [Uguette Berger] who always asked whether we would sing in the choir. Apparently, should we answer: No, it would diminish our chances to enter the school! We had to try to plane wood and I was no good at it and later they made us cut a corner on a violin. For the bows, they had organized six or seven sticks, more or less ready, and we had to put them in order of readiness. We had to draw the head of a violin and the previous year, I had taken some classes at the Boule Institute in Paris, so I did that well.

O.F.: When was the choir?

J.G.: I don't remember, maybe on Friday for about an hour. We sang old French songs and Guillaume de Machaut's music. The choir was exclusively for those taking violin and

bow-making classes only. It was intended as part of our musical upbringing along with instrument learning and a very basic music history. La Guégette (as we called her) was very serious in teaching us and oversaw most of our musical upbringing. We had 20 hours at the school (for violin, choir, and the regular classes) and twenty hours at the workshop.

O.F.: So were you in class with Pascal Lauxerois?

J.G.: Yes, I remember him well. We were good friends during his days at the school. After graduation, he went to work with Wilfred Akoune for one or two years and later he moved to Grenoble.

O.F.: When did you first meet Monsieur Ouchard?

J.G.: At the interview.

O.F.: Did you stay in the dormitories?

J.G.: Yes, for the first two years. Essentially, we had to stay in the dormitories until we turned 18. At the time, a number of parents petitioned the school to allow us to stay off campus but the principal, Monsieur Mathis, had no interest at first. In my last year I shared a small apartment with a fellow violin-maker at the school, Jean Larose. I remember Stéphane Tomachot had his little apartment as well and I shared mine with Jean.

O.F.: Did you keep your first bow?

J.G.: Yes, I kept it.

O.F.: How did Ouchard teach?

J.G.: He was highly respected and none of us would ever question his concept. We called him maître and he had total control over us. He was the master and we were the students.

O.F.: At first, did you work on the sticks only?

J.G.: Exactly, we used to work on bows in groups of approximately thirty. Essentially, we'd work on making thirty sticks knowing that many would end up in the garbage and only five or six would actually be finished as a bow. We used the same idea with the frogs, starting with thirty of them. The idea was to repeat the physical movement of making a bow and learn by repeating the motions.

O.F.: At what time did you start working on the frog?

J.G.: We would start it around the second trimester of the first year. By Christmas of the second year, we would have fully finished our first bow.

O.F.: What about the materials?

J.G.: All materials needed to make a bow were available at the school. The *passant* [ring] was pre-made in *maillechot* [nickel silver] and I didn't get to work on silver until the end of my third year when I prepared my final bow.

O.F.: What about the adjusters?

J.G.: The adjusters were also pre-made and we only had to add the eye at the back. Essentially, we didn't make the *passant* and the buttons.

O.F.: What about the varnish?

J.G.: The varnish was a gum of lack with a little oil. We applied it by putting friction on the stick, essentially rubbing it into the wood of the stick. To this day, I still use this approach. I tried different ideas but I find the gum lack works best.

O.F.: What does gum lack look like?

J.G.: They are flakes. It is just like when you look at shiny wooden furniture. It has a thick shiny skin. When passing the gum lack, it creates this thickness on top of the wood. In general they are light or dark flakes and we buy it by the pound and cook it in alcohol in order to melt it, and there comes our varnish. It's a very simple process. The varnish of a bow is much less important than that of a violin. One cannot compare them. For the bow, it has only a cosmetic value.

O.F.: Looking back at the school, what were the pros and cons?

J.G.: The pro was the quality of the teaching. Most of us became bow-makers and our teacher was somebody very good and we all remember him warmly. The cons were that we didn't see any musicians for three years and no older bows were ever brought to our attention. We received very little help with cambering a bow; although Monsieur Ouchard explained that when cambering the hair should touch here and there, we didn't know why it had to be. In general, he never explained why anything had to be done a certain way. Finally, Mirecourt is not a very exciting city and although we all turned out fine, we had no idea about our future.

O.F.: Obviously Monsieur Ouchard had his own problems; [were you aware of them?]

J.G.: I was not bothered by any of those because the issues became stronger later. He did sometimes arrive with a hangover and we knew then to avoid asking too many questions.

O.F.: Did you know his wife and children?

J.G.: I knew his wife very little and never met his children. He kept his private life away from the school. Looking back now at what really happened when they brought him back to Mirecourt, from Switzerland, his wife was very unhappy to return to her roots. In many ways, this is probably what brought him to the bottle since he was upset at the situation.

O.F.: Why do you think he agreed to return to Mirecourt?

J.G.: Essentially, they forced him to return by offering this position since he was the only one available. You must remember that few bow-makers were available at that time in France. To make him come, they had to offer much (although I don't know the exact terms) but obviously, it wasn't enough. Meanwhile, he took it upon himself to handle his problems and never forced them on us.

O.F.: Was his wife from Mirecourt?

J.G.: Yes, I think she was.

O.F.: Should we reopen a class at the school?

J.G.: After winning the Paris Competition in 1999, I tried to push to reopen the school with some of my colleagues. I offered to teach at the school and 99% of all violin-makers agreed at the time but only 50% of bow-makers approved. Eventually, the project was dropped by the French government and I left to teach in the USA at Peter Prier's shop right after Benoît Rolland. Now, ten years later, I would not want to teach at the school.

O.F.: What happened after the school?

J.G.: In 1978 I received my BT. I was then supposed to work for Camurat where Jean-Yves Matter was working but eventually I starting working on my own and did a short "professional training course" with Benoît Rolland in Paris. In 1979, following the birth of my son, Rolland hired me for a year. When Benoît Rolland left for the Island of Bréhat in 1984, I took over his shop where I stayed for six years. In 1990, I left to work with Jean- Yves Tanguy in Caen until 1996 when I return to the Southeast and in 2001 moved to the United States until 2006. I am now back in France, in Angers, and hope to stay here for a very long time.

O.F.: How did your style evolve throughout the years?

J.G.: Ouchard was a true Mirecourt bow-maker. He learned from his grandfather and was not influenced by the Parisian school. Once I moved to Paris, I was able to see many beautiful bows that quickly changed my style. Especially the old French such as Vigneron *père* always fascinated me. Later, I was very attracted by the late Voirin bow models, the very thin bows. I would say that now my style is mostly influenced by an era, the1800-1850 French school, which is a style lost in Mirecourt as well as Lamy and Sartory.

O.F.: How do you sign your bows?

J.G.: I first signed them in 1984: Jean GRUNBERGER à PARIS but now since 2006, it is Jean GRUNBERGER. At one time I had a J.GRUNBERGER brand.

Appendix K

Stéphane Tomachot, interview with the author, July 2010

Olivier Fluchaire: How did you find out about the school?

Stéphane Tomachot: It was through a family friend who was working for France Musique. His name was François Vercken and he had met Jean Bauer and told me about the school. I thought it sounded very interesting.

O.F.: Were your parents musicians?

S. T.: Not at all.

O.F.: Did you play an instrument before entering the school?

S.T.: I only played a little guitar.

O.F.: Where did you come from in France?

S.T.: From outside Paris, in a village near Versailles.

O.F.: How hard was it to commute to Mirecourt?

S.T.: It was far, about 190 km! I rarely came home. At the time it took an entire day to commute.

O.F.: When you applied to the school, did you want to become a bow-maker or a violin-maker?

S.T.: Through the tests, I was placed as bow-maker.

O.F.: What kind of test did you have to take?

S.T.: I had to cut a corner of a violin with a knife and draw the head of a violin (that was hard for me because I never drew well). We also had to look at bows that were unfinished and we had to put them in a logical order of readiness. We also had a small interview but

I don't remember it much. I know that I was one of the seven chosen from the one hundred and twenty tested.

O.F.: Who was your principal at the school?

S.T.: It was Monsieur Mathis. He was a good man.

O.F.: Do you remember who the principal was after Monsieur Mathis?

S.T.: In 1977, it was Monsieur Converset who stayed as principal at least until 1981. I was on the jury for the BT and he spoke to me and said: "Tomachot, you are now on the other side of the fence!" Before Monsieur Mathis, it was Monsieur Pariente.

O.F.: When at the school did you stay in the dormitories?

S.T.: Yes I did. It was difficult but I had a lot of good friends. I was fortunate to have really good people around me. Jean Grunberger and Pascal Lauxerois were there and also Jérôme Bonaldit who left after the first year.

O.F.: What did you do during your spare time?

S.T.: We played music and/or constructed guitars. I remember making a guitar.

O.F.: Did you learn the violin while at the school?

S.T.: Yes. Like everybody else, I studied with Uguette Berger. She was the violin teacher since the beginning of the school. But we had no choice; violin was the only instrument we could learn. I was never really good. To be honest, I didn't enjoy playing the violin and the sound was bothersome. Even later in 1985, when I had a small workshop in Paris, I often did not enjoy listening to violinists trying bows right next to me. But don't get me wrong: it' s a very different experience when I hear the violin being played at a concert. I think I may have enjoyed learning cello much more.

O.F.: In a way, it's nearly ironic to think that you create the bow that makes that sound you dislike!

S.T.: At first I thought that it was strange but then realized that it allowed me to attend to the violinists' needs maybe in a better way since I was not creating a bow for myself.

O.F.: Do you remember the first time you met Monsieur Ouchard?

S.T.: Probably at the entrance test.

O.F.: Did you keep your first bow?

S.T.: Yes.

O.F.: If you were to paraphrase the Ouchard Method, how would you describe it?

S.T.: I would say that it was the true Mirecourt way, following Émile Ouchard *père*, not E. A. Ouchard, since he studied bow-making with him. He worked with his father when they went to Paris in 1941-42 but before that, he learned from his grandfather. It was following the tradition of the nineteenth century. It was much later in life that I realized that while restoring older bows.

O.F.: Did you know Madame Ouchard?

S.T.: Yes but she was a little distant with us. She was from Mirecourt and that's where they met. Her husband, Bernard Ouchard was a good person, in a warm way, and he enjoyed being with us. Wherever we met at the café or the local bar, he was an important figure to most of us and I really liked him.

O.F: What was the first thing Ouchard taught you?

S.T.: To cut the stick.

O.F.: What about the varnish?

S.T.: Ouchard's varnish was a gum of lack. To be honest, the varnish of a bow is not as important as the varnish of a violin. We put the gum of lack with a little oil on a cloth and applied it on the stick.

O.F.: What about the curriculum?

S.T.: Not until the second year did we start making a bow from A to Z.

O.F.: What happened to those bows?

S.T.: Every year they were sold at the St. Cécile celebration in Mirecourt.

O.F.: Were any bows silver or gold mounted?

S.T.: No, they were all nickel mounted; only our final bow was silver mounted.

O.F.: Would you like to return to the school?

S.T.: Yes, I have no regrets.

O.F.: Do you think the bow-making class should reopen?

S.T.: I have mixed feelings. Sometimes I think we should and sometimes I think we shouldn't. It's complicated since now we have a good number of true professional bow-makers who have formed the next generation. I taught at least ten new bow-makers. Often, it is more the *luthier* who wants the school to reopen instead of the bow-makers. They need people to re-hair and restore bows for them. Furthermore, the problems with pernambuco cannot be forgotten. The school opened its doors in 1970 because soon there would have been very few, or maybe even no, bow-makers left in France. Thanks to Ouchard, he restarted the Mirecourt tradition.

O.F.: How did your style evolve after Ouchard's teaching?

S.T.: That's hard to answer. I am more interested in round heads- not the Peccatte model. I really admire Persoit, Eury, Peccatte, but my style may be closer to that of Voirin/Lamy. From a performance aspect, I prefer the early nineteenth-century bow but with a Voirin look.

O.F.: Did you ever make Baroque bows?

S.T.: No, although my wife is a Baroque *luthier*. Interestingly, I really enjoy Baroque music and listen to a lot of Baroque music.

O.F.: After the school where did you start working?

S.T.: I worked at Phillipe Bodart in Marseilles in 1978. In ‘78, I was waiting for a visa to go and work at Peter Prier’s in Salt Lake City but my visa was delayed. Thus, I went to Bodart. In June 1979, I was asked to work for Max Möller in Amsterdam and accepted the job since the visa had not arrived. The visa arrived in October 1979, but it was too late. I was very happy at the Möller workshop. Afterwards, I returned to Paris in September 1980 and in 1981. I started working on my own there, first in a small apartment, then in 1983, I moved to a larger location where I stayed until 2001. In 2001, I moved to Provence to Cucuron, a half hour north of Aix-en-Provence.

O.F.: How do you sign your bows?

S.T.: I sign them S. Tomachot à Paris. A few were signed S. Tomachot in the early part of my life with a stamp given by Phillipe Bodard.

Appendix L

Michel Jamonneau, interview with the author, October 2009

Olivier Fluchaire: How did you find out about the Mirecourt School?

Michel Jamonneau: I was 15 when I applied and when I arrived we were about sixty. I later found out that three hundred students had applied that year. I wasn't too good in school but enjoyed working with my hands. When I was young I met a few musicians and by luck found out about the Mirecourt School. I applied to become a violin-maker but was accepted as bow-maker. But within a few months of working at the school I was happy as a bow-maker.

O.F.: Did you play an instrument prior to entering the school?

M.J.: No, I was not from a family of musicians but started learning the violin right before entering the school.

O.F.: Did you stay in the dormitories?

M.J.: Yes, but it was a little difficult. On the other hand, I was sixteen and free; that was incredible. The last year, as soon as I turned eighteen, I rented a room off campus. I paid my rent by making bows.

O.F.: Do you remember the principal?

M.J.: Monsieur Converset for the three years I was there.

O.F.: Do you remember your first meeting with Monsieur Ouchard?

M.J.: The first time was during the tests. I had to take a few tests but I don't remember all of them. We went into a small room and they showed me a few bows and asked for me to compare them and Ouchard was present. The next time I saw him was in September. Ouchard was really a nice man, a wonderful person.

O.F.: How would you describe his teaching style?

M.J.: He was the best. His strong force was to not speak. All of us were very well chosen and Ouchard never screamed at me. I would not say that he encouraged me but we had the best professor because he accepted us as if we had always been a part of his entourage. We wanted to learn and he was there to help us.

O.F.: But was Ouchard following his style and his father's style when teaching?

M.J.: Yes, he was and he never spoke about Tourte or Peccatte.

O.F.: Did you ever have any kind of history classes such as the history of violin or bow-making?

M.J.: No, unfortunately.

O.F.: Did you know Ouchard's family?

M.J.: No, very little.

O.F.: Obviously Ouchard had his own problems. Were you aware of them?

M.J.: Yes, we all knew about it and drinking is probably what killed him. He drank a lot of beer. We would often find him at the local bar. We could sit with him and have a nice conversation.

O.F.: Did he smoke?

M.J.: Yes, Boyard *maïs* [corn] cigarettes.

O.F.: Do you remember your first bow?

M.J.: I remember one of my very first bows. Actually I gave it to my friend Jacques Poullot.

O.F.: If you could turn the clock back, would you enter the school again?

M.J.: Yes, I would like it.

O.F.: Should the school reopen its bow-making class?

M.J.: I have no answer for that. The question is really: Is there a market for bow-makers today? When we went to Mirecourt, Ouchard, Bazin, Lotte and Morizot were around to teach us.

O.F.: Compared to the Ouchard style, how did you evolve?

M.J.: Now I look at the nineteenth-century bows before Lamy/Sartory and often make copies from the old masters.

O.F.: Did you make Baroque bows?

M.J.: Only a few.

O.F.: When thinking about Ouchard as a teacher, what comes to mind first?

M.J.: His singing. He had a good voice. But also his hands; they were the true hands of an artisan.

O.F.: Would you like to say anything else?

M.J.: After Mirecourt, we were placed in a shop and I was supposed to go to the Taconnier shop in Bordeaux. But one day Ouchard came to speak to me. He was very angry and Taconnier was not to take me. Thus I had to find my own first job. Maybe it was because I was not the best student at the school. I could make bows but at school my grades were not very high.

Appendix M

Jacques Poullot, interview with the author, October 2009

Olivier Fluchaire: How did you find out about the Mirecourt School?

Jacques Poullot: At first I thought that violin making may be interesting but upon researching, I actually applied for the bow-making classes. A friend of mine who played the violin in my father's orchestra introduced me to the string family. The string instruments seemed more interesting than brass instruments. My father played the tuba and I played piano and trombone.

O.F.: Did you stay in the dormitories?

J.P.: Yes, in the first two years; in the third I rented a small apartment.

O.F.: Did you enjoy the dormitories?

J.P.: Not at all! To be honest, those three years are not a good memory for me.

O.F.: Do you remember the principal?

J.P.: The first year Converset arrived.

O.F.: What did you not like at the school?

J.P.: The dormitories were awful, the food was bad, and the city was boring and it was difficult when arriving directly from the Parisian suburbs. There was not much organized to make the schooling enjoyable either from Ouchard or the others. The principal wanted to reform the entire school but was not doing much. For me, the school was a big negative shocking experience.

O.F.: What about Ouchard? How would you explain his teaching?

J.P.: I know that most thought a lot of him but for me, he did not do much. Essentially, the ones who taught me were the students from the previous years. When I arrived, I was

across from Jean-Pascal Nehr and he was very nice and kind and he taught me more than Ouchard. In 1976, it was already a mess. Maybe it was different when Benoît or Sylvie Masson entered but by that time he was already very sick from his heavy drinking.

O.F.: When did the problems start?

J.P.: I don't really know but before Mirecourt, at Vidoudez's, he was already difficult. He didn't want to work, didn't want to re-hair, sign bows, etc. By the time he arrived in Mirecourt, Vidoudez was tired of him and was probably about to fire him. He had gone to work for Vidoudez, because there was no more work at the time. It was after the war and he always worked under the umbrella of his father. During the war, he worked in Paris at the rue de Rome shop. Then his father left to go to the United States, following his divorce in 1946, and Bernard Ouchard was angry with his father for leaving his mother.

O.F.: Do we know why they divorced in 1946?

J.P.: Well, his father, E.A. Ouchard, was also an alcoholic and probably had some extramarital affairs. When his friends from Mirecourt came to visit, the parties lasted until late in the night.

O.F.: What about Bernard Ouchard? Did he speak a lot?

J.P.: No, he did not speak much and I think he didn't have much to say.

O.F.: In terms of making bows, am I right in thinking that Ouchard taught mostly his style?

J.P.: Yes, it followed the good French way. He was shocked that someone would want to actually make bows. We were only two with Jamonneau that year. Ouchard was not very nice to us. Some are pushing an image of Ouchard as a great master but really he was not all that incredible. Clearly E.A. Ouchard was a genius but his son never reached that point.

O.F.: Do you remember Jean-Claude Ouchard's teaching at the school?

J.P.: He never taught at the school.

O.F.: I thought he substituted for Bernard during his sickness?

J.P.: I have no memory of it. But he often came to see his brother. Ouchard sold most of his bows to Jacques Bernard but Vidoudez probably never bought anything from him. Camurat and Vatelot may have bought some of his bows during the early Mirecourt days. During my first year in Mirecourt in 1976, they spoke about closing the door and Ouchard panicked in the middle of the St. Cécile meetings at the thought of being unemployed. During his life, there were only Audinot and J.J. Millant as competition for him and I think that Bernard Ouchard was a better bow-maker than they.

O.F.: How did your style evolve?

J.P.: I export a lot. I am especially interested in creating a production of bows. I create, along with my wife, about a hundred bows per year following the Sartory format. Bows are for sale in most countries.

O.F.: Did you create Baroque bows?

J.P.: Yes, a lot. I was once asked to create Baroque bows for an entire orchestra! I had to make twenty-five bows ready for the Church of Santa Cecilia in Rome.

O.F.: Should you have a chance to be fifteen again, would you return to the school?

J.P.: No, I would have preferred to learn with Lotte directly. As much as I didn't get on with Ouchard, I liked Lotte a lot. I would often go to his house on Wednesdays. Obviously Lotte was Ouchard's first cousin and he helped the school a lot. I think Lotte was proud to teach at the school after Ouchard.

O.F.: Would you like to see the school reopen a bow-making class?

J.P.: No, I wouldn't think so. It is better to learn one-on-one. Currently there are too many violin-making schools. I think it is better to work with a bow-maker.

O.F.: Anything else you may want to tell me

J.P.: The training was not really serious. We didn't know how to choose wood nor to sell a bow. All he taught was to make a bow. It was also a little too strict. Benoît and

Tomachot helped me a lot later. Benoît was very generous in his knowhow and a natural pedagogue. He helped a lot of us, and Ouchard called him his best student.

Appendix N

Éric Grandchamps, interview with the author, July 2010

Olivier Fluchaire: How did you become interested in instrument-making?

Éric Grandchamps: At home my father was a handyman. I like the smell of wood and next door to my house lived a cabinetmaker and at the time I would play in his workshop. At the age of 9, I started playing as a cabinet-maker and by the age of ten I started being interested in sculpture and at thirteen started taking lessons.

O.F.: Did you play an instrument?

E.G.: Not at all. My only advantage over others for the entrance exam in Mirecourt was my knowledge of sculpture. When I was thirteen I started the guitar. I studied the violin while at the school.

O.F.: How was your entrance audition?

E.G.: By that time they had stopped asking for hands-on tests but I had brought some drawings and a sculpture but there were no requirements. They looked at my school grades from the past three years. We were six hundred applying for three seats in bow-making and three in violin-making. At the end we were only twenty-five. In many ways, at the interviews, I think they were looking more for the negative than the positive qualities. We also had to have a health visit and a meeting with the principal, the instrumental teacher, and the two professors of violin and bow-making. Clearly, the principal was not very nice and tried to be nasty to us.

O.F.: Who was the principal at the time?

E.G.: It was Monsieur Converset for the three years. But at the end there was an older lady, Madame Ducant, who worked at the school and she was very difficult. Always punishing us. I met her again, later in life, when she told me that she knew how we would

jump out of the windows and play pool. Actually, Bernard Ouchard taught us how to play pool.

O.F.: Was he a good player?

E.G.: He was okay. Essentially averaging 1 or 1.5, an average score for French billiards. But he enjoyed playing as much as teaching us. He probably liked being with us.

O.F.: You knew him at the end of your life?

E.G.: Yes, I was very close to him. He liked me and we played pool together. It was often I who, at the end of his days, would relay messages between him and the school. At the end, he had to send paperwork to the school and I would do it for him. The last time I saw him he said: "Let's say goodbye, the time is coming." I knew it was the last time.

O.F.: What did Ouchard die from?

E.G.: He died from many different problems. During the Indochina War he caught dysentery and he died from a problem with his pancreas, possibly pancreatic cancer. At the end his skin was yellow and he would urinate blood. He also had major liver problems probably as a result of his drinking problem, but by the time I arrived at the school, his drinking problem was under control. Clearly, for medical reasons, he had to stop drinking.

O.F.: Did you know his family?

E.G.: She would have liked to stay in Geneva. I don't think they were on the best of terms. Having known his employer in Geneva, I think that he was tired of endlessly making gold-mounted bows to be exported to the United States. Since he was one of the very few bow-makers left, after the War he made too many bows for export. Looking at his production, it was very good but one may feel a little let down compared to his reputation.

O.F.: Would you say that his bows may represent the better side of Mirecourt?

E.G.: Not exactly. His bows were different but Monsieur Lotte was pure Mirecourt. Ouchard was fascinated by his father's work but obviously he had a problem with his father. He never told us about it.

O.F.: Could it be related to the divorce?

E.G.: Maybe, I don't know. He never spoke about his mother. He spoke about his father. He had three models of heads from his father and would say: "If you don't know what to do, copy those." He always pushed his father's work, knowing that his was not as good.

O.F.: But his father moved from Paris to the States, leaving him behind.

E. G.: Do you know how he moved?

O.F.: No.

E.G.: It was a B-52, at the end of the war, which carried all of his wood and tools! And to thank the pilot, he made him a bow (in the American model) that is pictured in Christopher Brown's *Discovering Bows for the Double Bass***.**

O.F.: When E.A. Ouchard left for America, what happened to his tools and wood?

E.G.: The wood probably stayed in the States or maybe he used it all. Monsieur Monnin would know about this. You should call Marcangelo in Lausanne and speak to Frédéric who knew Monsieur Monnin. He would be able to speak to you about Ouchard. He may be able to explain the Indochina stories that I don't really understand. Why did he go? Was it a suicide idea? Running away from his father?

O.F.: Did you have your own apartment in Mirecourt?

E.G.: In my first year I stayed in the dormitories but then rented a small apartment. I wasn't supposed to be able to rent an apartment but eventually the school looked the other way. I wasn't a bad student; actually all of us were good. Of course, we were teenagers and had a few parties at which we drank a little too much but nothing so unusual for a teenager. Apartments were cheap. One could rent a large place for 200 French Francs, and since I quickly understood how to make bows, I would sell some to

pay my rent. This way I could work at home. During my first year, we had taken over an unused room at the school where we would go to make bows after hours. We would jump from the window to go and make violins or bows.

O.F.: Since you were not staying in the dormitories, it may have been easier to meet Monsieur Ouchard away from the school?

E.G.: Exactly, but we never spoke about bows away from the school. At school, he would teach us in adjusting perfectly each part of the bow. He often said: "Ça joint ou ça joint pas" (It fits or it does not fit). So we would bring something to him and he'd say: "Does it fit or does it not" and I'd say: "it somewhat fits" and he'd say: "Well, then it doesn't fit." After that, you would never bring him unfinished work. Essentially, we could not move on to the next job until the first one was perfected. It was very difficult and so was he.

O.F.: Was there a logical chronology in passing from one task to another?

E.G.: Well it may have been different with the first students, with so few students. At first, we learned about planing wood and removing the three axes, meaning to cut a perfect square. Then, making a *faux équerre* [false flat angle bracket] before working on the small details with a *lime* [file]. Then, we'd finally make the stick and work on cambering and adding the head plate. Then work on the *passant* [ring] and finally start working on the head with a knife. Then we learned how to adjust the length of the *passant*.

O.F.: Did you make buttons?

E.G.: No, Ouchard was buying his adjusters from Jérôme.

O.F.: Who was Jérôme?

E.G.: He was an older gentleman. He always had many stories. He had a shop in Mirecourt with good head plates but the rest was just a mix of all instruments. He had an unusual character and probably exaggerated every story he ever told. But Ouchard bought his buttons from him and they were often not very good and often some would

have to fix them. There was a time when all pieces of the bow were not equal and, in Mirecourt, it would be common to have people make violins together.

O.F.: Do you remember your first bow?

E.G.: Yes, I gave it to my parents.

O.F.: If you were to be fifteen years old again, would you return to the school?

E.G.: Yes but as Ouchard would say, it is a lot of work that one would maybe not wish upon one's own children.

O.F.: Why did Ouchard leave Geneva to return to Mirecourt? Did the Parisian dealers offer to sell his bows?

E.G.: By my time, it was Jacques Bernard, known as Bernard De Liège in Belgium, who sold his bows. At the very beginning I don't know who bought bows from him. I'm not sure why he returned to Mirecourt but one has to also look at why he went to Geneva. There was a story of the purchase of wood that I don't remember but know that it involved Ouchard, Lotte and Vidoudez. But I know that he was already working at Vidoudez when the wood story happened. When he came back from the Indochina War, it was another strange time and somewhat unclear.

O.F.: Should one reopen the bow-making class in Mirecourt?

E.G.: No. Essentially it has become clear that the reason the shops would want to reopen is to hire those youngsters and make them re-hair and restore bows while paying them the bare minimum. If we look at the state of our business, and currently the very unhappy instrument-makers graduating from Cremona or Germany, we should not start a bow-making course. It is clear that when the school was created, bow-making was about to be lost. Now we have thirty to fifty bow-makers, and each can teach privately as I do and I never receive money from my students.

O.F.: How did your bow-making style evolve?

E.G.: At the school, Ouchard would show us a style to start from but would allow us to express our own creativity. None of his students has the same style. My favorite influence comes from one single bow I saw for one hour. It was made by Simon but not so typical, more Lafleur-like.

O.F.: Did you make Baroque bows?

E.G.: Very few; it's not really interesting to me.

O.F.: Where did you go following your graduation?

E.G.: Following my graduation, I continued my training in Geneva until 1983 in the shop of Bernard Bossert. There, I also met jewelers and engravers and tried to apply their skills to bow-making. In 1983, I moved to the Presqu'île de Crozon [near Brest]. Since 1986, most of my production has been exported to Japan.

O.F.: Would you like to tell me anything else?

E.G.: The last day, in May 1979, before he died about ten days later, we were late and Ouchard looked at his gold Swiss watch and he said: "I'm dying and I show up on time, yet you dare to show up five minutes late." It was the last day and he felt the need to speak endlessly, as if he were to tell us all before dying.

Appendix O

Georges Tepho, interview with the author, October 2009

Olivier Fluchaire: How did you find out about the Mirecourt School?

Georges Tepho: When I was a child, I played a little viola. Instrument-making, not so much bow-making, quickly attracted me but violin-making seemed interesting. At the time, through a selection, they decided that bow-making might be better for me.

O.F.: Where did you come from?

G.T.: I am from Brittany. During every vacation, I returned home during the first two years but in my last year, I rented a small apartment in the city of Mirecourt.

O.F.: Am I right in thinking that during the first year you had to stay in the dormitories?

G.T.: Yes, but essentially once we were eighteen or had someone who would act as a guaranty, we could stay off campus. Having an apartment off campus allowed more freedom that one could not have while staying in the dormitories.

O.F.: Did you work with Roger Lotte during your last year?

G.T: Yes, after Ouchard passed away, Roger Lotte taught us.

O.F.: Talking about the passing of Ouchard, what did he die from?

G.T.: He was fragile and had health problems. When I started knowing him, he was already sick.

O.F.: According to everybody, it is clear that he enjoyed drinking

G.T.: Well exactly, it was probably the reason for his sickness. We never had details at the time but the alcohol abuse most likely affected his health.

O.F.: Did he still speak about the Indochina War at the end of his life?

G.T.: Very little. He mentioned it but never spoke much about it.

O.F.: So when did Ouchard stop coming to the school?

G.T.: In my first year, he was there, but during the second, he was often at the hospital. Often Jean-Claude Ouchard, his brother, would substitute for him. I remember a time on a Wednesday morning when we decided to be a little late for class. On that same occasion, Bernard Ouchard had decided to buy a *pain au chocolat* for each one of us. It was the very first time he ever did something like this. I'll never forget how much he screamed at us because we were late and he was dying away yet arriving on time. For him to have brought a *pain au chocolat* was such an unusual gesture that I'll probably never forget that day.

O.F.: How strict was Monsieur Ouchard?

G.T.: He was strict but maybe less as the years passed. He was an "old school" teacher but at the end, he knew that his time was coming and his character changed. He wanted to give as much information as he could, maybe because he wasn't sure how much longer he had left. His attitude changed.

O.F.: What about his bow-making models?

G.T.: His models were based on his bows. He expected us to follow his model.

O.F.: Which principal was at the school during your days?

G.T.: For the first two years, I had Principal Converset and then another but I don't remember him.

O.F.: Did you know Ouchard's family?

G.T.: Not really. I only met his wife once. His brother Jean-Claude came to teach when he was sick and stayed in the hospital for a few weeks.

O.F.: So that was before Roger Lotte started teaching at the school?

G.T.: Exactly. Bernard Ouchard probably started being absent a lot around Easter 1979, Jean-Claude Ouchard would then substitute for him, and then Roger Lotte started coming around the end of the year in May-June 1979. Bernard Ouchard died in June 1979.

O.F.: How was Jean-Claude compared to Bernard Ouchard?

G.T.: He was much quieter. Not the same strength that Bernard had. We didn't see him all that much but I think he may have been a little uncomfortable to substitute for his brother.

O.F.: What about Roger Lotte? How was he compared to Bernard Ouchard?

G.T.: It was very different. As much as Ouchard represented the beautiful side of bow-making in Mirecourt, Lotte was more "into" the tradition of making bows very fast while maybe overlooking some of the details. Lotte was very happy to teach us and to follow in the footsteps of Ouchard.

O.F.: Do you remember your first bow?

G.T.: At first we had to make sticks, then frogs, and eventually try to make them go together. My first bow I remember well and I still have it. I have a box of bows that I keep as personal memories and this one is part of it.

O.F.: When Lotte took over, did he change the curriculum?

G.T.: It stayed the same but since he didn't want to have too many students at the same time (we were a total of four), every two weeks two of us would go to his workshop while the other two would work at school on their own.

O.F.: If you could turn the clock back, would you enter the school again?

G.T.: Yes, I never regretted it. Life in Mirecourt was not always perfect but I learned the skills I needed. I have mostly good memories of those days.

O.F.: Should the school reopen its bow-making class?

G.T.: Yes. It was a more democratic way of offering the learning process to all and from that approach. I would like to see something happening. I have trained three or four bow-makers.

O.F.: Compared to the Ouchard style you learned at the school, how did your style evolve?

G.T.: For a few years I stayed in the same style as his. One could divide my bow-making into three periods: first, following Ouchard/Mirecourt, then, influenced by Simon, and finally, influenced by Pageot/Lafleur.

O.F.: Do you also make Baroque bows?

G.T.: I only made a few Baroque bows but I enjoy more and more making classical bows in the style of early Tourte.

O.F.: Anything else you would like to tell me?

G.T.: The school was a grand chance for the bow-making world and having Ouchard head the program was also incredible. At the time there were very few bow-makers left and the knowledge could have been lost. It gave a new vitality to bow-making.

O.F.: Vatelot was backing up the school. Did he visit often?

G.T.: Yes, Vatelot and many others would come and visit for the holiday of St. Cecile in November.

O.F.: Was that the time when they would sell the instruments?

G.T.: No, they were sold to the dealers at the end of the academic year. Essentially, each dealer would buy a few instruments, at a very low price, and the money would benefit the school.

Appendix P

Louis Monnin, interview with the author, November 2009

Olivier Fluchaire: When did you start in the Vidoudez workshop?

Louis Monnin: I was twenty years old; it must have been in 1945 until 1991. Bernard Ouchard and I were in the same workshop, facing each other.

O.F.: When did Monsieur Ouchard arrive in Geneva? Was it after his father had left to go to New York?

L.M.: It was a few years after his father left. He went to the Indochina War first, then came to Geneva to work at Vidoudez. Obviously, he spoke of the war a lot but his work at Vidoudez was always exemplary. The war always marks people a lot and he told me many stories about it but he was always a wonderful person.

O.F.: From where was his wife?

L.M.: She was from Mirecourt. They met in Mirecourt where they married. We were long- term friends with him and his wife. He worked a lot following Vidoudez's and my suggestions in terms of the shape of heads, and the bows had to be perfect or else they were never kept. Monsieur Vidoudez would always collaborate with us and we wanted very good work. We had a lot of good wood and with Bernard Ouchard at the workshop, we were able to create very fine bows. With all the beautiful old wood, we made a lot of gold mounted bows, with tortoise shell or ivory frog.

O.F.: Where did Vidoudez's wood come from?

L.M.: When E. A. Ouchard went to Brazil, he mailed some wood to us but we didn't use much of it since he sent us a lot of bad wood. Meanwhile, we had wood from Monsieur Gillet, who was also from Mirecourt originally and had worked for Sartory. During his lifetime, we bought wood from him and, after his passing, a lot from his inventory. Monsieur Ouchard had no wood although his father, E. A. Ouchard, did give him some at

the very end of his life when he was in Vichy. We also bought some from Richaume in Paris who had beautiful wood. We only made beautiful bows at the top level. We really made bows from A to Z unlike other houses like Fétique or Sartory. Often, Gillet would make the bows and Sartory would sign them but you could see on the head, right at the axis of the head, there is a bump that a real Sartory would not have.

O.F.: When Monsieur Ouchard was offered to move to Mirecourt, was he happy?

L.M.: He hesitated a lot. Really he didn't know what to do; he would even cry thinking about returning to Mirecourt after having been in Geneva for so long. When Monsieur Vatelot called us, he asked for Bernard to come to Mirecourt and become the main bow-making instructor at the school. So he went following Monsieur Vatelot's request. After that, we visited Bernard and his wife in Mirecourt a few times.

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