



The Violin Maker: A Search for the Secrets of Craftsmanship, Sound, and Stradivari

John Marchese

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How does a simple piece of wood become a violin, the king of instruments? Watch and find out as Eugene Drucker, a member of the world-renowned Emerson String Quartet, commissions Sam Zygmuntowicz, a Brooklyn craftsman, to make him a new violin. As he tells this extraordinary story, journalist John Marchese shares the rich lore of this beloved instrument and illuminates an art that has barely changed since the Renaissance.

Marchese takes readers from start to finish as Zygmuntowicz builds the violin, from the first selection of the wood, to the cutting of the back and belly, through the carving of the scroll and the fingerboard, to the placement of the sound peg. Though much of the story takes place in the craftsman's museum-like Brooklyn workshop, there are side trips across the river to the rehearsal rooms of Carnegie Hall and Lincoln center, and across the world. Stops on the itinerary include Cremona, Italy, the magical city where Antonio Stradivari (and a few of his contemporaries) achieved a level of violin-making perfection that has endured for centuries, as well as points in France and Germany integral to the history of the violin.

A stunning work of narrative nonfiction that's also a finely crafted, loving homage to the instrument that most closely approximates the human voice.

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