



CENTRE
DE MUSIQUE
BAROQUE
Versailles

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS N°4

« *Bass Violin of the Grand Siècle* »

FOUR- OR FIVE-STRING ITALIAN
BASS VIOLIN

Muzikanten in een loggia, Leonaert Bramer, 1606 - 1674



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Experimental Construction of an Italian Bass Violin with Four or Five Strings

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Preamble

These Technical Specifications form part of the project “**The Bass Violins (1650–1720)**”, initiated by the Centre de musique baroque de Versailles (CMBV), with the aim of expanding its collection of instruments. The project is part of a scientific and artistic initiative intended to deepen our understanding of the instruments that were in use in France during this period.

The purpose of this call for projects is to invite proposals for a four- or five-string Italian instrument that can be identified as a bass violin and that could plausibly have been played in France during the period 1610–1720, particularly within the context of the performance practices associated with the « *Les Vingt-quatre Violons du Roi* », the official orchestra of the French royal court.

The documents of the *Minutier central* relating to the history of music, studied by Madeleine Jurgens for the period 1600–1650, clearly show that the instruments used by Parisian musicians could be described as *basse de violon de Bresse*, *basse de Lorraine*, or *basse de violon de Crémone* (“bass violin from Bresse,” “bass from Lorraine,” or “bass violin from Cremona”). These designations reflect not only the geographical origins of the instruments but also the complex commercial, political, and cultural networks that linked France with various territories of the Italian peninsula.

While Cremona naturally occupies a major position in the history of violin making, notably because of its international prestige and the widespread dissemination of its instruments, it is important to avoid a retrospective interpretation that restricts Italian influences solely to the Milanese or Cremonese centres. Brescia, Salò, and, more broadly, the territories belonging to the Republic of Venice until the end of the eighteenth century maintained close commercial and cultural ties with France, particularly during the seventeenth century. Likewise, the dynastic and artistic relationships between the French court and the territories of Savoy-Piedmont, Florence, Rome, and Modena encouraged significant exchanges of musicians, repertoires, instruments, and organological models.

Within this framework, proposals may be based on models from various Italian schools that could plausibly have contributed to the French bass violin practices between 1650 and 1720. Instruments belonging to the Brescian, Venetian, Roman, Florentine, Piedmontese, Modenese, or Cremonese traditions may therefore be considered, provided that they are supported by a coherent and well-argued historical hypothesis. Particular attention may be given to models associated with makers such as Gasparo da Salò and Giovanni Paolo Maggini in Brescia, Matteo Goffriller in Venice, David Tecchler in Rome, Doni in Florence, Castagneri or Senta in Turin, Galli in Modena, as well as to the broader Cremonese traditions.

We are also aware of the difficulties that certain Italian instruments may present, and we will not accept models whose provenance, authentication, or attribution raises particularly complex or controversial issues. It is therefore of the utmost importance that the maker present a carefully considered and well-supported hypothesis when proposing a model.

Particular consideration will be given to applications from makers who have already built a bass violin based on an existing and convincing Italian model, with a view to producing another example of that instrument, subject to any adaptations that may emerge from discussions with the CMBV project steering committee.

The instrumental collection project of the Centre de musique baroque de Versailles has been made possible thanks to the support of the CMBV Endowment Fund and its patrons. The reconstruction of the bass violins of the Vingt-quatre Violons du Roi was made possible through the support of Crédit Agricole Île-de-France and the Fondation Crédit Agricole Pays de France, the project's main sponsor.

ARTICLE I

Selection Criteria

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Applications must meet the following criteria:

- Demonstrated experience in the construction of a bass violin based on an Italian model.
- Quality and relevance of the proposed model, taking into account its organological and historical significance, and in particular its potential use in France between 1650 and 1720 (preference will be given to instruments showing the greatest potential within this framework).
- The selected maker must be willing to work in close collaboration with the scientific committee of the CMBV's Bass Violin project and must be able to accommodate possible adaptations to the model, provided that such modifications are minor and duly justified.
- The CMBV will give particular consideration to makers who can demonstrate substantial experience in the construction of violins, especially bass instruments.

Note : The maker is not necessarily required to have previously built an Italian bass violin. Applications may also be considered from makers who have identified an instrument of particular interest for this project and can provide supporting documentation, including photographs and, where possible, technical drawings, measurements, or survey data.

ARTICLE II

Application Dossier – Required Materials

Makers are invited to submit an application dossier containing the following elements :

1. Presentation of the Maker / Workshop (maximum 2 pages)

- Professional background, area of specialization, and relevant experience.
- Previous work related to historical instruments.

2. Presentation of the Selected Bass Violin Model (maximum 1 page)

- Precise identification of the Italian model.
- Detailed organological description (outline, dimensions, materials, and technical characteristics).
- Relevant historical sources, where applicable (archival documents, surviving instruments, reference models).
- Images and information relating to an instrument already built according to the same model, if applicable.

3. Supporting Argument for the Proposed Model (maximum 1 page)

- Justification for the choice of model, particularly with regard to its suitability for use in France between 1610 and 1720.
- Historical and musical significance of the proposed model.

4. Visual Documentation

- Photographs of the original instrument (minimum of five photographs).
- Plans, drawings, tracings, or technical surveys, where available.
- Photographs, videos, or audio recordings of previously made copies based on the same model (if any).

ARTICLE III

Construction documentation

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The selected maker shall provide comprehensive documentation at the time of delivery of the instrument, in both digital and printed formats, recording the various stages of the instrument's construction. This documentation must include, at a minimum:

- **A detailed description of the materials, tools, and techniques used**, comprising between 1,000 and 3,000 words (approximately 2 to 5 pages);
- **Photographic documentation** illustrating the principal stages of the work, including at least 5 to 15 photographs covering each key phase of the construction process;
- **An instrument record and maintenance sheet** for the delivered instrument(s), including recommendations for care, maintenance, and conservation, comprising 1 to 3 pages;
- **One or more video recordings** documenting the principal stages of construction (minimum of 1 to 4 videos). If recordings are made using a mobile phone, videos should be filmed in **landscape format** (phone held horizontally).

This documentation will be made partially available to the public through the CMBV website and social media channels, as well as within an internal working environment, in order to promote and share the instrument-making process.

ARTICLE IV

Hosting an apprentice as part of the project

In addition to the technical requirements set out above, each selected maker will be required to host an apprentice during the construction of the instrument(s) as part of a mentorship programme. This initiative reflects a strong commitment to the transmission of craftsmanship and expertise, supported both by the project's patron and by the CMBV.

The apprentice, whether at the beginning of their training or engaged in a more advanced specialization, will be selected in consultation with the maker. Particular consideration will be given to candidates from the Île-de-France region, although this is not a mandatory requirement.

The financial arrangements will be determined on a case-by-case basis. The apprentice may be remunerated either directly by the maker or by the CMBV, depending on practical needs and budgetary considerations. The funding allocated to support this educational component, distributed according to the duration of the apprenticeship and the number of apprentices involved, may be discussed and adjusted in consultation with the CMBV.

At the conclusion of the apprenticeship period, the apprentice will be required to submit a written report documenting their experience. This report will contribute both to the project's documentation and to the preservation of the knowledge generated through the programme.

ARTICLE V

Monitoring of the construction process

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The maker undertakes to provide regular progress updates to the members of the steering committee in accordance with a schedule established by mutual agreement.

Any technical choices and/or modifications contemplated during the course of construction must

ARTICLE VI

Project supervision and acceptance of the work

The services provided and the formal acceptance of the completed work shall be carried out under the supervision of Adriana Isaku, Project Officer and Coordinator of the Bass Violin project at the Centre de musique baroque de Versailles(CMBV).

ARTICLE VII

Rights

The photographs, negatives, and digital files supplied as part of the documentation produced by the maker (Article III) may be used by the CMBV for publication, editorial, and/or exhibition purposes, the maker hereby assigning all related rights to the CMBV.

In return, any publication, communication, or dissemination by the CMBV, in any medium whatsoever, that makes use of or refers to the documentation produced by the maker under the present contract shall explicitly acknowledge the maker by name.

ARTICLE VIII

Deadline

The instrument must be delivered on the date agreed with the instrument maker when the order form is signed.

ARTICLE IX

Price

The prices fixed for this construction are final and non-revisable. They are specified in the purchase order appended to these specifications.

ARTICLE X

Transfer of ownership

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The maker shall retain ownership of the instrument until full and effective payment of the purchase price has been made by the CMBV.

Maker's Surname:

Maker's First Name:

Date:

Apprentice: Yes No

Apprentice (if applicable)

First Name:

Surname:

Instrument Price:

Delivery Date:

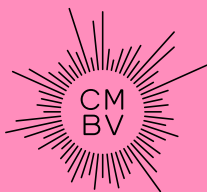
Signature

(Preceded by the handwritten statement "Read and approved")

Application dossiers should be submitted to the Project manager and Coordinator of this project :

*Adriana ISAKU
isaku.adriana@gmail.com*





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