



The Historian

A Man's Life – A Nation's History

A Newsletter for Friends of the Sanderson

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NEWS FROM THE MUSEUM

Sanderson Strings – The Exhibit

Sally Denk Hoey

As a music major in the late 1960's at Chris Sanderson's Alma Mater, West Chester State College (now University), I was required to learn to play the violin. With my uncle's c.1925 French-made J. Didelot violin I thought, 'It's just like a small guitar. This will be easy.' But I soon discovered making sweet sounds on an instrument without frets and having to deal with a long, delicate bow more difficult than I ever imagined.

So how did I come to be curator of the 2018 "Sanderson Strings Singing Through History" Exhibit?

About 12 years ago, I invited international violinist Sylvia Ahramjian, then head of the String Department at West Chester University's School of Music, in to see the Sanderson's string collection. The 6 violins and 2 viola d'amores in Chris's iconic collection, were hidden on a lower shelf lying flat where no one could see or hear them. Sylvia explained that after so many years, the seams were loose as well as other minor structural problems and it would cost about \$600 per violin to restore them to concert condition. But there was a catch. The Sanderson had an old heating system and no air- conditioning. It was freezing in the months we were closed and unbearably hot and humid in the summer. Restoring the violins for this environment would be a waste of valuable funds.

But she also gave me a name...David Bromberg Fine Violins in Wilmington, DE. As the years went by, I never lost sight of my dream of having Chris's violins

restored and hearing them sing again. Enter Chuck Ulmann.

I had known Chuck for several years through our mutual friend, the late historian Paul Rodebaugh. Soon he was volunteering with our founding curator Thomas "Tommy" Thompson. In 2006, Tommy, now almost 90, was wise enough to see that Chuck was the only one with the knowledge, discipline, temperament and sense of organization to become the museum's second curator. By 2008, Chuck was in full control with an agenda centered on preserving the collection.

By 2012, he was discussing a new environmental system with museum and HVAC specialist- the dream of hearing the violins sing again was about to come true. In 2015, the Sanderson's was on line with a new state of the art HVAC system. Now it was my turn.

On April 29 of 2015, Chuck and I wrapped the violins and two viola d'amores in blankets and quilts (we had no violin cases), put them in the back of his SUV and drove down to Market Street in Wilmington to keep an appointment with David Bromberg of David Bromberg Fine Violins.

David gave us an oral appraisal of the violins recommending that we restore the C.F.Schuster & Sohn Guarnerius model, as well as the Ole Bull Stainer model to concert condition. David also introduced us to master luthier (violin maker) Teal Wintsch and archetier (bow maker) Glenn Bearden who appraised and educated us about the viola d'amores. And even better, David virtually gave us pre-owned cases for our violins.

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If the name David Bromberg sounds familiar to some of you folkies and blues fans of a certain age, yes, it's the same David Bromberg. He's played with the best of them including Bob Dylan, George Harrison and Jerry Garcia. More recently he performed with Joan Baez on her 2016 PBS special for her 75th birthday as well as headlining this year's famed 2018 Philadelphia Folk Festival.

Some months later, after the C.F. Schuster and Ole Bull were returned to the Sanderson, we received an email from Nancy Guthrie Kener and her husband Bill of Manchester, Missouri. Nancy's late grandfather of the Chadds Ford Guthries, had received a violin from Chris Sanderson many years ago, which had been found in a barn, under the straw...in three pieces! Did we want it?



Teal Wintsch with our Schuster & Sohn violin © 2015 sdh

Once again, Teal Wintsch worked his magic. The violin, a pre-1920 violin made in "Nippon" (Japan) of Satinwood (a flowering hardwood from South-east Asia) could not be brought back to concert condition with our limited funding, but the

finished work was masterful and to the untrained eye, perfect!

Now, all that was left to do was get in line for an exhibit date, continue the research, re-arrange the Music Room to feature the iconic violins, create the brochure, order new professional display cases for three of the instruments and make the display labels.

The 2018 Sanderson Strings exhibit will become a permanent exhibit in the Music Room in December of this year.

SANDERSON STRINGS – SING AGAIN!

Sally Denk Hoey

Now that two of the Sanderson Violins were restored to concert condition, our long-awaited dream was about to come true- to hear them sing again after over 50 years gathering dust on a shelf.

Museum members and friends had the first opportunity at the exhibit opening reception on Wednesday evening, April 18, 2018.

Thanks to the generosity of board member Carol Little, we were able to obtain noted local violinist Carole Armstrong Lovelace, to entertain us on the Sanderson's C.F. Schuster & Sohn violin and the Ole Bull violin.



Carol Armstrong Lovelace on the Ole Bull violin © 2018 sdh

Blessed with a warm and bubbly personality, Carole Lovelace brought everyone into the fun while playing the songs Chris Sanderson might have performed in

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his day. And the violins sounded amazing!

Beautiful displays of hors d'oeuvres, refreshments and a raffled basket of goodies were provided by The Mendenhall Inn, Hollie Gorman, Sally Hoey, Carol Little and Donel Manke.

The second opportunity to hear and see the violins up close was on Saturday afternoon, May 12 in the large assembly room in the Chadds Ford Historical Society's restored barn headquarters, thanks to their Executive Director Mike Connolly.

David Bromberg's master luthier, Teal Wintsch of Baltimore, Md agreed to give a lecture and demonstration on the history of violin making using all seven of the Sanderson violins and the two viola d'amores.



Sally Hoey Sanderson Violin Curator & David Bromberg.

The event was well attended with members and friends of the Sanderson Museum and members of the Chadds Ford Historical Society. A surprise guest was Doug Roland of Philadelphia, Chris Sanderson's second cousin, who later visited the museum.

Teal briefly played the two restored violins during his entertaining and informative lecture. After the lecture, fiddler Roslyn Blyn LaDrew of Honey Brook, Ashby Rice III of West Chester and the noted violin virtuoso Andrew Vogts of Chadds Ford demonstrated

their talents on the C.F. Schuster & Sohn and the Ole Bull.

And surprises keep coming in. Recently new information has been discovered on the Rossmassle(r) violin hinting at a big c.1935 Chadds Ford connection!

But now it's your turn! These violins need to be played to keep them in tune and to keep the wood resonating.

The Sanderson Museum is looking for mature, serious (amateur or professional) violinists and fiddlers to come to the museum to play the C.F. Schuster & Sohn and the Ole Bull violins for at least a half an hour.

Please contact Sanderson Violin Curator Sally Denk Hoey at sdenk1777@verizon.net to reserve a time.

THE LITTLE GRAY HOUSE

Our recent campaign to raise money for the Little Gray House has been a huge success. We surpassed our goal of raising \$10,000 that would in turn be matched by an anonymous donor. To date we have raised \$27,160 (including the match). These designated funds will help us paint all of exterior wood, replace a window that is starting to fail on the east side of the building and obtain a thorough inspection, repair and replacement of the clapboards on the circa 1900 part of the building. One person helping with the evaluation of the clapboards made the comment that "they are only staying in place with paint and memory." This is the part where Chris and his mother lived when they moved to the Little Gray House in 1937.

Your continued support is greatly appreciated.

THANK YOU!!

Christian C. Sanderson Museum
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Go Green and receive The Historian via email. Send your email address to executivedirector@sandersonmuseum.org. Thank you!



The Christian C. Sanderson Museum - A Man's Life, A Nation's History. An eclectic array of art, military memorabilia, presidential artifacts, local history and collectibles. History like you've never seen it before! Open March through November, Saturday and Sunday, 12pm to 4pm or by appointment.

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