

A violin Bow by James Tubbs, London c. 1870

Catalogue Number RKT-1112 \$10,000

An unbranded English violin bow by James Tubbs:

Repairs: There are no visible repairs, though the silver wire grip is not original.

Condition: This bow is in remarkably fine condition with only minor wear. It may be that it has only been re-haired a few times. The original ivory tip face is in good condition and the edges of the frog are still quite sharp. The characteristic Tubbs style adjusting screw shows little wear.

Comments: This bow is apparently an early bow by James Tubbs likely around the time he helped establish the workshop of W.E. Hill & Sons. It shows most of the features by which later bows of this maker are known. There is to be seen the slightly large flared head, the elongated ferrule, the fine and supple dark round stick and the Tubbs screw. In contrast to later bows however, it has an ivory tip face rather than silver, the ferrule is thinner than on later Tubbs bows and the frog is cleverly designed without a spreader wedge. It is also worth noting that the tip of the head is shorter than on late Tubbs bows. The frog is decorated with a mother of pearl dot whereas later period Tubbs bows invariably have plain sides. The wood of the stick is lighter and more reddish than is typical with later Tubbs bows. Overall this bow has a slightly more transitional character to it than what we expect from modern bow makers.



James Tubbs in his Shop

This bow is sold with a certificate of authenticity by Reid Hudson, Duncan BC 2010

A violin Bow by James Tubbs, London c. 1870

Catalogue Number RKT-1112

\$10,000



An unbranded English violin bow by James Tubbs:

This bow is sold with a certificate of authenticity by Reid Hudson, Duncan BC 2010

Description: This bow has a round stick of red-brown pernambucco wood with an ivory tip face and silver wire grip. The rounded silver mounted ebony frog has a mother of pearl slide and dot. The adjuster is covered in silver. There are no apparent cracks or repairs, though the silver grip is a replacement. It is notable that the frog is designed without a spreader wedge.

Weight: 59 grams

Balance point: 24 cm. from the adjuster

October 29, 2010

TUBBS, JAMES.

Born in London, 1835. Son of William. Worked for father until 1860. Owned a small shop in Church Street, Soho, 1861. Moved to High Street, Marylebone, 1864. Employed by William Ebsworth Hill during these years, and specimens of his talent, bearing Hill's name, are easily recognisable, and artists never have hesitated or showed the slightest reluctance to embark on the expenditure of several guineas for one. Greatly patronised by the renowned quartettists at the Monday Popular Concerts, London, from 1865. Extended his reputation by splendid productivity. Engaged finer premises in King Street, Soho. Settled in Wardour Street, 1872. Lived some years also at Staines. Returned to Wardour Street, 1911. Died 1921. Received the special appointment of bow maker to the Duke of Edinburgh. It is impossible for any person who appreciates a fine bow, not to hail with unalloyed delight any of the productions of James Tubbs—

A violin Bow by James Tubbs, London c. 1870

Catalogue Number RKT-1112

\$10,000

valuable accessions to the realms of famous French examples. Intimately acquainted with the minutiae of perfect balance, familiar with the diversified style of celebrated predecessors, trained by long study of all the laws, wisely assimilated suggestions from various violinists, brought a refined and matured tact in seizing all the bearings couched under strength and elasticity, imbued with a sincere love of artistry and a profound reverence for its dictates, and withal, endowed with a natural gift of manipulative skill. Possessed every qualification peculiarly fitting him to produce everything replete with perfection. This champion, completely disciplined, stepped forward to challenge the opinion that French bows were the *only* bows worthy of artists' acceptance, and, he won the day on this field he had entered. To say that he was the equal of Tourte, Peccatte, and Voirin, is not a wild and extravagant hypothesis. Artists have rendered it a matter of imperious necessity to possess one or more of Tubb's bows, and take pride in triumphantly proclaiming the fact. Take any specimen, subject it to minute examination, test it in strength and lightness, and you will soon be aware of owning a real treasure, something to stimulate fine playing. Turned out about ten bows a month. Best period 1875-1895. Contour of heads rather varied but always very beautiful. Magnificent sweep of stick, generally round and of dark pernambuco, but very occasionally of lighter colour. Wilhelmj owned a gold mounted presentation bow bearing the inscription "*To Wilhelmj, from the Orchestra of the Wagner Festival, London, 1877*". The fame of Tubbs has led to the great multiplication of copies stamped with his name by the trade, particularly the German exporters. £30 to £45, 1960.

- from The Universal Dictionary of Violin and Bow Makers by William Henley

In his early career, Tubbs used wood of light brown color, some of which were made for W. E. Hill. A good number of these he colored artificially to almost black. Later he used wood of darker shades. With some use and wear, they are now of a beautiful dark red wine color. The sticks are always round. The heads are fine and large, resembling slightly those of the last period of Tourte L'Ainé. Followed practically the same pattern of heads throughout his working life. Face, of over medium width, having a medium curve, point of medium size and thickness. Ridge nicely curved, bevel of medium width, bottom end of head joining shaft has pronounced roundness. When working for W. E. Hill, he used ivory for the tips, but later always used metal. His frogs are of a bold model with wide and heavy mountings. The metal piece at the end of the pearl slide and the rear heelplate are made of a single piece of metal. The buttons, in the later period, have solid metal caps. Mr. Arthur Dykes stated that James Tubbs discontinued the use of pearl dots on the sides of his frogs about 1894 or 1895, thus providing a clue to the period to which his bows may be attributed. He made many special or presentation bows, with frogs mounted with gold and beautifully engraved with presen-

- From "Bows for Musical Instruments" by Joseph Roda