

A violin by Ch. J.B. Collin-Mezin, Paris 1893

RKT-1272

\$16,000

Labeled: “Ch.J.B.COLLIN-MEZIN, Luthier a Paris, Rue du Faubg & Poissoniere, No. 10”
The label is initialed and hand-dated 1893. It is also signed by the maker on the inside of the back.

Repairs: There are a few minor cracks in the front which have been well repaired. There has been an invisible repair done to the button of the back and the centre joint has been repaired. The ribs have been shortened in the lower bout at the bass-side corner. The neck has been re-set and the fittings are new.

Condition: This instrument is in very good restored condition.

Comments: This is a particularly striking violin by the celebrated French maker and comes from his mature period. The figure of the maple is particularly attractive and highlighted by a transparent golden varnish. The tone of this violin is quite loud and penetrating in keeping with the maker’s reputation. A Hill registration number, “W512” can be seen on the end of the fingerboard. This would have been catalogued by William E. Hill & Sons in the late 1960’s.

COLLIN-MEZIN, CHARLES JEAN BAPTISTE.

Born at Mirecourt, 1841. Son of C. L. Collin. First apprenticed to his father; removed to Paris, 1868. Soon became a favourite and prosperous repairer; and commenced to make his own instruments, which in all details other than the varnish, follow the larger models of Stradivarius, Guarnerius and Amati. Awarded gold and silver medals at the Paris Exhibitions of 1878, 1889 and 1900. Named Officer de l’Académie des Beaux-Arts, 1884. Died 1923.

he mistrusted any artificial process of heating or chemically treating the wood. Guaranteed all instruments to be made of wood grown old naturally, and attributed the tonal success to his knowledge of wood and experiments in acoustics with a special system of bass barring according to the age and kind of material used.

For our part we think he failed where some Frenchmen have succeeded, and that is, he never succeeded in imparting any real beauty of tone notwithstanding the assertiveness of his secret processes. We admit the extremely powerful order of this tone, coupled with hard-to-get brilliance, but it will take many years of strenuous playing to bring its now comparative harshness to the necessary purity for a successful soloist. Workmanship in every part particularly fine, therefore players fifty years hence may be proud of their possession. Varnish, yellow or brown yellow, not distinguished by any gorgeous splendour of transparency, in fact it is often very thick and dull.

Benjamin Godard’s Concerto Romantique was first performed at a Pasedeloup Concert, Paris, 1876, by Marie Tayau on a Collin-Mézin violin with (what was then an innovation) E and A steel strings suggested by the maker. which rather points to the fact that he was attempting to get brilliance and clearness at the expense of purity.

Violas and cellos are larger imitations of the violins. £60 1959.

Longeur: 9 cent. Lauteur: 2 cent.
Ch J. B. Collin-Mézin fils —(1868-1876)
Luthier. Paris l’an 1870

Longeur: 9 cent. hauteur 3½ * 1890
Ch. J. B. Collin-Mézin C M —(1876 onwards)
Luthier à Paris
Rue du Faubg: Poissonnière No. 29

Ch. J. B. Collin-Mézin
Luthier C.M.
Grand Prix-Exposition Universelle, 1900.
Paris, 1921.

Each instrument stamped at the side of sound post with *Collin-Mézin*, a copyright facsimile of signature.

Popularity of these violins gave rise to many counterfeits in the nature of violins labelled Collin, being foisted on the credulous public by unscrupulous vendors in the trade instruments made by Collin-Mézin. Collin-Mézin instruments are only genuine when bearing the signature, and (on the later ones) the announcement of the Grand Prix.

Produced excellent bows of pernambuco wood for which he received as much as £5; but of late years this price has steadily dropped although the article has considerable resistance and flexibility with nice weight and balance.

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

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A violin by Charles J.B. Collin-Mezin, labeled: “Ch.J.B.COLLIN-MEZIN,
Luthier a Paris,
Rue du Faubg & Poissoniere, No.10”

The label is initialed and hand-dated 1893. It is also signed by the maker on the inside of the back.

Description: This instrument has a two-piece maple back showing beautiful medium figure descending from the centre joint. The sides and neck are of matching material. The front is of two pieces of spruce showing fine grain becoming broader towards the edges. The fittings are of rosewood. The varnish is of a very light orange-brown over a yellow ground and is in good condition with minor re-touching. There are repaired cracks in the front at the upper eye of the bass sound hole and the lower eye of the treble sound hole. There is an invisible repair to the button of the back and the centre back joint has been repaired. The ribs have been shortened in the lower bout at the bass-side corner. The neck has been re-set and the fittings are new.

Back measurements:

Length: 358 mm. Upper bout: 162 mm. Middle bout: 114 mm. Lower bout: 201 mm.

This instrument is in very good condition. It is registered in our records as RKT-1272.

March 12, 2013