

Christian Bayon, luthier.

Christian Bayon was born in Paris in 1955. His family had no musical inclinations. When he was 16 he joined the French navy for 6 years, working as a technician on the hydraulic systems of fighter planes on the Foch aircraft carrier.

In 1976, when he was still in the navy, he began teaching himself to make stringed instruments. He had made ten by 1979, the year in which he obtained the "Bourse de la Vocation" vocational grant. On this occasion he made the acquaintance of Jean Schmitt and Etienne Vatelot. The latter invited him to work from time to time in his workshop.

In the same year, he became the assistant of Jean Schmitt in Lyon where, at the same time, he undertook research into acoustics with E. Leipp (CNRS) and Voichita Bucur.

In 1982 he became the assistant of Etienne Vatelot. This was a very happy period, working in a workshop where he encountered the best musicians and the finest instruments in the world.

In 1984, he set up his own workshop in Morlaix (Britanny) and joined the Groupement des Luthiers et Archetiers d'Art de France (Association of French Stringed-Instrument and Bow Makers). Then, in 1986, he opened a second workshop in Rennes.

In 1989, somewhat unsatisfied with the quality of instruments available for repair in a provincial town, he decided to move to Lisbon (Portugal) to work on more interesting instruments. By 1993 the latter objective was fulfilled and he was repairing violins made by Stradivarius, Guarneri, Montagnana, Amati, etc. He was also working for musicians like Augustin Dumay, Truls Mork, Jian Wang, Maxime Vengerov, Shlomo Mintz, Daniel Muller-Schott and Lynn Harrell.

In 1997 he became a member of the International Society of Violin and Bow Makers.

In 2003, he abandoned restoration to devote himself to making violins, violas and cellos in an attempt to recreate the superb instruments that had passed through his hands in the 28 years he had spent as a stringed-instrument restorer.

In 2004 he is invited in Cremona by the "Consorzio Liutai Antonio Stradivari" for give a master-class about set-up and sound adjustment to the violin-makers of this city.

Soloists such as Tedi Papavrami, Augustin Dumay, Michal Ka_ka (Prazak Quartet), Silvia Simionescu, Pavel Gomziakov, Justus Grimm, Liana Gourdjia and Tatiana Samouil now play instruments made by Christian Bayon and the names in his order book are enough to make any stringed-instrument maker very happy indeed: Truls Mork, Jean-Guihen Queyras, Geneviève Laurenceau, Jean-Marc Phillips, and so on.