

Cremona lutherie school moves and expands

CREMONA'S VIOLIN MAKING school, the Istituto di Istruzione Superiore Antonio Stradivari, has moved premises and launched a new course for instrumentalists. The school is now housed at the Palazzo Pallavicino Argizani, which it shares with the Stradivari Foundation. The school's director Mirèvia Mondini said: 'The new building gives us more space and more security. It is a better quality of environment for the students.' In addition to relocating, the school has incorporated a new specialist music high school, with eight string players among its first-year intake of 24 students. Mondini said: 'I hope that having violin makers and string players studying in the same school will enable them to understand each others' needs and aims.'



Chilean strings project seeks aid

THE INTERNATIONAL VIOLA SOCIETY is leading an appeal for instruments and funds to help rebuild a community strings programme in Talca, Chile. The city, which is around 160 miles south of the capital, Santiago, suffered major damage in the country's devastating 8.8-magnitude earthquake in February.

Violist Bono Cardenas, who runs the programme with violinist Solange Navarrete, explained: 'Some of the students' instruments were destroyed, and we lost all our scores and books to

water damage. We have had some help from the state university and businesses, but they were hit hard themselves, and much of the government and regional money that was earmarked for the arts has been channelled into reconstruction.'

The strings programme began in 2008, offering beginner lessons to children in communities with some of the highest rates of poverty and unemployment in the country. Cardenas and Navarrete have also helped develop local youth orchestras involving 500 children.

US fellowship gives UK string player free rein



AN AMERICAN CONSERVATOIRE has come up with a new approach to help young musicians further their careers. Bard College Conservatory of Music's artist fellowship scheme has been inspired by creative writing fellowships and emphasises the artist's personal development over what they bring to the academic community. London-born violinist and violist Helena Ballie is the first artist fellow. She said: 'The programme offers an unusual degree of freedom, with a job description that says, "Be creative." Among her plans are to transcribe and learn the Schumann Cello Concerto for viola, produce an educational film on Paganini's 24th Caprice, and develop a workshop uniting folk and classical musicians.'

◆ THE AMERICAN VIOLA SOCIETY (AVS) is offering free downloads of viola scores. The music includes works for multiple violas and music by US composers such as Charles Martin Loeffler, Theodore Thomas and Maurice Gardner as part of the AVS's American Viola Project. The scores are available to download at <http://americanviolasociety.org/resources/scores>.

◆ VIOLINISTS CONTESTING next year's Tchaikovsky Competition in St Petersburg will have some very starry names to impress. Maxim Vengerov and Vadim Repin have

both been recruited as jurors by competition chairman Valery Gergiev, and Anne-Sophie Mutter will chair the jury, in what will be her first ever appearance on a competition judging panel.

◆ DANIEL HOPE, CAROLIN WIDMANN AND JOANA PETCU-COLAN have selected their favourite contemporary solo viola pieces for a new collection published by Universal Edition. *Viola Project* features nine works, all written in 2008 or 2009, by composers including Arvo Pärt, Ennio Morricone, Luke Bedford and Salvatore Scaramino.