

# **“Practical & Artistic Violin Varnishing”**

**2024**

*Welcome to the workshop.*

We thank you for your interest in the 2024 Violin Varnish workshop. This week long comprehensive course is designed to advance and refine each participant’s varnish technique and build upon each individual’s artistic vision. Our focus is on application and sight training: ground coating, wood color, varnish layering, mixing color and a variety of application and polishing techniques will be addressed. We will explore the history and evolution of violin varnish. Through good information and informed choices, varnishing a violin is a simple and straightforward and fun process. Each of us has extensive experience in varnishing and teaching and we are committed to making this part of violin making successful and enjoyable for you.

*Staff:*                    [Joe Robson](#), [Aubrey Alexander](#), and [Todd Goldenberg](#)

*What we do:*            The workshop group of 3 staff and up to 20 participants, each with a different kind and level of experience, quickly develops a “crew” atmosphere. Our focus is to understand the materials and how they work together through application. Our scope is comprehensive. There are many “proper” ways to varnish a violin. The workshop curriculum will include basic techniques which apply to any varnish: ground applications, choosing and mixing color, managing texture, polishing etc. We will demonstrate [with your participation] complete and shaded varnishes and the methods to create an antiqued finish.

Workshop is an opportunity to experiment. Our activities will include these [including others!] : Explore the variety of Ground materials and their physical and optical properties. Examine the classic Cremonese varnish as it applies to modern making. Group instruments: Antiquing methods can be “additive or subtractive”. There will be a group instrument which we will collectively antique. From completing an oil varnish in four coats to preparing for competition we will work with your goals.

In addition to our full time staff we will have “visitors”. Chicago is a hub of both contemporary violin making and shops which offer antique instruments. We anticipate visits from both [and they bring some nice “eye-candy”!].

*Where we will meet:* We will meet this year at the Chicago School of Violin Making. CSVN, founded by Tschu Ho Lee, is in Skokie, Illinois, just outside Chicago. CSVN is a full time teaching program and we will have full use of their facility for a week of their break between semesters. The room has good light, excellent bench facilities, and good ventilation. Chicago is an exciting center for the violin trade with various shops and makers in the immediate area.

*What to bring:*            Each participant will bring [at least] 2 instruments [violin or viola]. We suggest one instrument in the white prepared for ground if you are not familiar with the Balsam Ground System. One [or more] instrument with a ground applied, prepared for varnishing. You may also bring an instrument which is already varnished. This would allow you to follow the antiquing process as you work on methods of antiquing.

Each participant will have bench space and an individual drying box. Basic bench set up i.e. violin stand and cradle, varnish mixing tools, good lighting, shop supplies [cloths, solvents, gloves etc.] are all provided. You are encouraged to bring any varnishing materials which you would like to use or experiment with.

**Materials Kit:** The workshop is a time for experimentation. If you have specific materials you would like to try, please bring them. The workshop materials kit [see attached document] is a comprehensive set of products and brushes which will allow you to experiment and varnish a number of instruments. It is provided at a discount of retail value to encourage your experiments.

**Accommodations:** Arrangements have been made with the Extended Stay America Hotel in Skokie. This facility offers large rooms with kitchen facilities in each room. The hotel is about 3 miles from the school. We will have transportation available between the school and the hotel. There are many restaurants and grocery stores within walking distance of the hotel.

**Schedule:** April 20th - April 27th. We will begin on Saturday afternoon of April 20th. After 1 pm. you can join us there, set up your bench, and get acquainted. Our initial formal meeting will be at 4:00 that afternoon. The workshop will close at noon on April 30th. For those of you flying in or unfamiliar with the area, we can provide information about locations and travel arrangements.

The formal daily schedule will begin at 9 am. and end at 5:30 pm with a lunch break. The workshop will open about 8 am. Normal shop closing will sometime after 6 pm depending on how our day's work is coming to a close.

**Cost and payment:** The workshop fee is \$1750 [\$1811 if you wish to use Visa or MasterCard]. This covers both Tuition and the Materials Kit. Payment by check will be made to: Violin Varnish Ltd. Mailing address: Violin Varnish Ltd., 14 Prospect Street, Trumansburg, NY 14886.

**Registration:** To register please fill out and return [by email or mail] the attached registration form as soon as possible. Send a registration check for \$250 [payable to Violin Varnish Ltd.] or credit card information. Registration funds will not be deposited until after the 1<sup>st</sup> of February 2024. Upon receiving your registration form and down payment you will be sent a confirmation email which will reserve your bench space. Payment in full for the workshop fee will be due on or before March 10, 2024. Post-registration withdrawal with the return of your fee will be possible only as long as we are able to fill your place with another participant. No return of the registration fee is possible after March 10, 2024. Payment in full is required prior to the workshop.

**Contact:** If you have questions or concerns please feel free to email me at [joewrobson@gmail.com](mailto:joewrobson@gmail.com) or call 607 387 9280 during business hours Eastern time.

We look forward to working with you!

Joe Robson

Aubrey Alexander

Todd Goldenberg