



## TITLE INFORMATION

### MADE IN ITALY

*Strings Attached--Four Seasons of an Italian Violin*

Thomas Walter Kelley

Old Stone Press (180 pp.)

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## BOOK REVIEW

Kelley takes readers on a discursive tour through the life of an Italian violin.

In May 2000, Kelley and his professional violinist wife Cheri realized their dream of owning a Cremonese violin. In Kelley's view, however, "You never truly own one of these violins, you simply pass through its life." So begins Kelley's unique and informative journey from the recent past through the four seasons of the violin's life, starting with 18th-century Cremona during the golden age of violin making. He details the masters of the form, Antonio Stradivari and Giuseppe Guarneri del Gesù, as well as the life, work, and continuing influence of the composer Antonio Vivaldi. In the second season, the violin comes to America, making its first documented appearance in 1901, when it was purchased in Illinois from a traveling salesman. In the third season, Kelley introduces the craftsmen responsible for the violin, focusing on Giovanni Battista Ceruti, who didn't open his violin shop until the age of 40. Throughout, the author also provides heartfelt anecdotes about his wife and her dedication to her craft. Kelley shares his own past as a former serious musician who graduated with a bachelor's degree in violin performance but realized toward the end of his college tenure that he'd never be able to make a living as a violinist. Instead, he ended up working in a small community bank, which eventually, through a series of mergers, became one of the largest banks in the U.S. Occasionally, the author gets sidetracked, recounting events that are only tangentially related, often including trips to Italy and the people he encountered along the way, but all in the same good-natured, effervescent, inquisitive tone. The picture that emerges is of a thoughtful, dedicated man who's earnestly pursuing both personal history and the history of violin making, weaving together his own experiences with deep research into the history of Italian violin making.

An appealingly personal and informative journey through the life of a violin and the couple who "own" it.

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