



## Violin by three makers is going to fly

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BY CHANNING GRAY, Journal Arts Writer

After attending several events by Community MusicWorks, Karl Dennis wondered what he could do for the group's 10th anniversary. But that was a kind of no-brainer, considering he's a premier violinmaker in the area.

"I couldn't give them meaningful amounts of money," said the Warren instrument builder. "But I could make them a violin."

Community MusicWorks being such a communal effort, Dennis decided to go the same route and ask a couple of his friends if they would join him in the project. Andrew Ryan and Tucker Densely both happily said "yes."

So for 2½ months the threesome took turns completing some phase of the project — each getting some grueling tasks, each getting some fun things to do. Dennis got to carve the scroll and arch the top, Densely was assigned the back, and Ryan did the so-called "f" holes cut into either side of the top.

They worked from plaster casts of a rare 1744 Guarneri del Gesu that belongs to a European owner. Ryan obtained the casts from a friend in Germany who had done restoration work on the instrument, which is, said Dennis, probably worth more than \$3 million.

Having the casts is even better than having the original instrument, said Dennis. They contain the same information about shapes and dimensions, but are not so fragile.

The violin was completed three weeks ago, and since then it has been passed around to players to be broken in in time for this afternoon's benefit concert, at which violinist Miriam Fried is expected to play it.

The idea behind the gift was that at some point Community MusicWorks will produce a student gifted enough to go on to a conservatory, and that the student will need a professional quality instrument.

Community MusicWorks is also using it for fundraising, hoping to match the estimated value — \$25,000 — with contributions to their program.

The nice thing, said Dennis, is that the instrument doesn't look like a violin made by committee, but rather one built by a single maker.

Even though it needs some seasoning, Dennis said from the start it was a nice-sounding instrument.

"I heard it when it was three days old," he said, "and you can tell if something is going to fly right out of the box. This one's going to fly."