

The VSA-Oberlin Acoustics Workshop and the Strad 3D Project

Fan-Chia Tao
Project Facilitator

For the past six summers, the world's leading violinmakers and violin acoustics researchers have gathered at Oberlin College, Ohio, for a week of talks, demonstrations and projects. The hope is that bringing these two groups together in an informal and interactive environment can lead to an exchange of ideas and inspire collaborative projects beyond the workshop. This Strad 3D project is one such result.

The VSA-Oberlin Acoustics Workshop grew out of the vision of several members of the Catgut Acoustical Society and the Violin Society of America. One of those key members was Joseph Regh, VSA Vice-President and a member of the Strad 3D project measurements team. In 2001, I was asked by both organizations to organize a violin acoustics workshop at Oberlin. My first act was to ask Joseph Curtin to help organize this workshop. Samuel Zygmuntowicz joined our faculty several years later and immediately added a new perspective and jolt of energy. The workshop has grown every year, and increasing numbers of European participants are now joining their colleagues from the United States and Canada. This summer (2007), we had our largest workshop with almost 50 participants.

There is now a growing acceptance and even embrace of violin acoustics and science by violinmakers, this after decades of indifference and even hostility. This change is symbolized by the merger of the Catgut Acoustical Society with the Violin Society of America several years ago. Today, the Catgut Acoustical Society operates as the CAS Forum within the Violin Society. It organizes acoustics related programs at VSA Conventions, sponsors the Acoustics Workshop, publishes technical papers in the VSA Journal and VSA Papers, and supports projects such as the Strad 3D Project.

Professor George Bissinger has been an integral part of the acoustics workshop from the beginning. His violin acoustics laboratory at East Carolina University is one of the world's most advanced. "We must take advantage of this fabulous opportunity to measure a great Strad!" remarked Sam at the Acoustics Workshop, and this was the birth of the Strad 3D project.

This project was enormously complex, requiring the cooperation and support of numerous individuals and organizations (please take time to review the acknowledgement list), and thus took several years to come to fruition. The enthusiasm and support of the participants of the Acoustics Workshop sustained us through this project. They have been truly inspirational.

Other exciting projects inspired by the VSA-Oberlin acoustics workshop are being planned or already in progress. We hope you will support this and future projects by purchasing this DVD and making a contribution to the CAS Forum!

Thank you for your support!