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of the 'Betts' Stradivari at  
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measurements. For the varnishing team, the next couple of days will involve a series of techniques to achieve the varnish wear, divided in two categories: 'chipping' and 'shading', even using rocks as tools.

**JUNE 26** The violin back has wood removed from the inside to prepare for graduation and plate tuning. The top is prepared in the same way, but the f-holes still need to be cut out. More experienced makers are chosen for the next critical steps. Some of the most valuable discussions occur spontaneously, such as when we consider the 'Betts sound' and how we're going to achieve that by tuning the top and back plates. This discussion began with three or four people around someone's workbench; soon, more than a dozen participants have joined in the debate.

**JUNE 27** Hugh Withycombe has planned a sound-comparison event for the participants who brought violins: a Baroque violinist has volunteered to play the instruments at the Oberlin Conservatory on Thursday. This has prompted a frenzy of set-up and sound adjustments in the workshop. Now the shift towards acoustics has taken over as we discuss things such as fingerboard tuning, body resonance and bridge tuning. The varnished 'Betts' copy looks great, and it is rewarding to see all the techniques come together. Finally, the stages of patina, touch-up and polishing are completed. The next task is the set-up, so the varnished 'Betts' can be played and tweaked for tomorrow's trial.

**JUNE 28** We calculate target frequencies to complete the back's Mode 2 and 5 tuning, and Feng Jiang completes the final graduations with accuracy and panache. The top is close to our calculated parameters (determined before bass-bar), and Ben Ruth has volunteered to fit the bar for tomorrow morning. The scroll and neck are completed with the fingerboard, and we decide to eliminate expectations of having this 'Betts' copy entirely glued together. Bill glues the back and rib structure, applies some colour treatment to the interior, dries it in UV light for two to three hours, then passes it around for everyone's signature inside the ribs.

At the violin playing test, our varnished 'Betts' copy is voted in the top three – a success by anyone's standards. Then it's off to the bow makers' house for their dinner party with great food, wine and music.

**JUNE 29** Friday is pack-up day so we all try to cram in last-minute work and exchange information before we head off to our lunch and powwow meeting to discuss our experiences over the past two weeks as well as things that need to be improved, and what project to work on for next year's theme. After the meeting we are sad to hear the sound of packaging tape, but happy to have been part of an incredible varnishing, making and acoustical experience. ■

▼ The finished 'Betts' copy, with varnish completed and fully strung up to be played

