



Clockwise from top left
Lutherie judges Luca
Primon and Andrea
Frandsen inspect a violin

Tone judges (left-right)
Massimo Quarta,
Francisca Mendoza,
Alain Ruaux, Robert
Cohen and Patrick
Jüdt perform on some
of the medal-winning
instruments

The final judging took
place at the Auditorium
Giovanni Arvedi,
with the instruments
behind a screen

top-scoring 10 per cent and compared notes with the tone judges. The task then was to decide which instruments would progress to the final scoring round of acoustic judging.

In the event, 7 violins, 5 violas, 6 cellos and 3 basses entered the finals on 21 September at the Museo del Violino's Auditorium Giovanni Arvedi – an engineering marvel with the stage set centrally, like an amphitheatre. During the acoustic test a tone judge performed from behind a screen to retain anonymity – first with a solo excerpt and again with piano. This test was open to the public, although the audience diminished noticeably halfway through the four-hour session, possibly once onlookers realised how serious the test was. Workmanship and tone adjudicators both participated in this round, and their marks carried equal weight. To make sure our impressions were not influenced by the previous

rounds, each instrument was re-labelled with a letter instead of a number. We assessed each instrument's acoustic qualities of projection, clarity and balance, and after lunch we gathered for the final results and began the business of choosing medals. It was a difficult task, but the numbers justified our decisions. The awards ceremony took place on 23 September at the magnificent Teatro Comunale Ponchielli with Paolo Bodini, president of the Fondazione Stradivari, announcing the winners. Of the four instrument categories only the viola section attracted a gold medal – awarded to French maker Charles Coquet. Despite the disappointment of the lack of golds, there was a good deal of enthusiasm for all the medallists, especially for Marianne Lenzini, who received the silver medal for her double bass. Lenzini was the only female medallist this year, and

works in Cremona with her husband Marco Nolli, who won gold for his double bass in 2012. The ceremony concluded with a performance of Dvořák's Quintet op.77 by the tone judges on the winning instruments.

The next day all the entered instruments went on display to the public at the MdV. Coquet's gold medal-winning viola will be added to the Museo's collection. At the exhibition several people asked why only one gold medal had been awarded, and I explained that an instrument requires a nomination of gold from both groups of judges to receive one. An instrument that receives the highest score for workmanship but a lower score for tone would receive a silver medal – still something to be very proud of. Having congratulated several of the entrants, I left the Museo full of pride for the high standard of work this year. ●