

A violin bow by J.J. Martin, Paris c. 1860

Catalogue Number: RKT-0667

\$20,000

A violin bow by Jean-Joseph Martin, Paris c. 1860

With a certificate by J.F. Raffin

Jean Joseph Martin - (b. Mirecourt (Vosges) 1837 - d. Paris 1910) was a French Archetier/Bowmaker. Served his apprenticeship with Nicolas Remy Maire. In 1858 left Mirecourt for Paris to join Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume's workshop. Five years later, JJ Martin came back to Mirecourt (1863) to open his own workshop. He also worked with Jérôme Thibouville-Lamy as they asked for his collaboration to build up their bow production. For a brief time, Martin also worked as director for another workshop in Mirecourt by Emile Mennesson, with the "Sainte Cécile" insignia. From that period one can find bows stamped J. Guarini. When Mennesson decided to transfer his activity to Reims, J.J. Martin took over the workshop and continued the production for a while. Among his collaborators (in his shop) was Joseph Arthur Vigneron.

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“Jean-Joseph Martin was born in 1837 in Mirecourt where he received his training. In 1858 he moved to Paris where he worked for Vuillaume, becoming a master in his trade and one of the great bow makers of this important firm. He returned to Mirecourt in 1863 and married Rose Mougénot. In Mirecourt he set up on his own account and began a career full of promise. By 1870 he had enough workers to be producing 144 bows per month. He also later contributed to the production of the first bows of the Jerome Thibouville-Lamy firm. Despite his hard work and tremendous will to succeed his business failed in January 1880. Until the end of his life, however, his work never suffered, and the quality of his bows remained high, which is a fine lesson in courage. We may regret that an honest and hardworking man, no doubt like other lesser known craftsmen, could have found it so difficult to make a living at that time. J.J. Martin was unfortunately more gifted as a maker than as a businessman.”

- information from “L'Archet” by Bernard Millant and Jean-Francois Raffin, Paris 2000

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Description: This silver mounted bow has a round supple stick and is typical of the bows that Martin made for the Vuillaume shop, featuring the Vuillaume style frog with its beveled ferrule and rounded lining.

This bow has a round pernambucco stick, of dark orange brown wood with an ivory tip face and silver wire grip. The silver-mounted ebony frog has a mother-of-pearl slide and dot. The divided adjuster is of silver and ebony. There is a small repair to the tip of the ivory tip face and the wire grip is not original. There are no other visible repairs.

Weight: 59.5 grams **Balance point:** 23.5 cm from the adjuster

Condition: This bow is in very good condition and in particular the stick and frog show only a small amount of wear for a bow of this age.

Comments: Players find this bow very lively and perhaps difficult for some to control. Though undamaged the wood is not of perfect grain and a little unpredictable. This bow has a balance of strength and flexibility throughout and imparts a slightly brighter sound to many instruments.

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