

A violin by H.A. Kretzschmar, 1914

Catalogue Number: RKT-0554

\$8,000

Labeled: “H.A. Kretzschmar, Expert Violin Maker and Repairer, Chicago Ill. Fecit anno 1914”

Repairs: The peg holes have been bushed and the pegs re-fit as there were two very small cracks in the peg box. The endpin hole has also been bushed. There are no other visible repairs.

Condition: This instrument is in excellent condition. The collector who owns it says that it has only been played for a few years early in its life.

Comments: This is a beautiful and well made violin by an important German American maker in an excellent state of preservation. Born in Bavaria in 1876, Kretzschmar won the prize for a violin exhibited at the Convention of the American Guild of Violinists in Chicago in 1912 and became established there soon after. He was noted for his varnish and workmanship and both are well represented in this instrument.

This instrument has a particularly open sound, full in the bass register and clear in the upper. The model of the instrument appears to be a personal one of the maker. The outline is slightly squarish in the shoulders and straight in the middle bouts, somewhat reminiscent of many Hopf violins of the 19th century. It is however made to a much higher standard. The back of the scroll for example shows a very delicate and crisp chamfer that is perfectly done.

KRETZSCHMAR, H. A.

Born at Weissenburg (Bavaria), 1876. Served a long apprenticeship at Markneukirchen. Prize winner, with highest marks at the Chicago Contest, 1912, during the Convention of the American Guild of Violinists. Established at Chicago, 1928. Convinced that correct principles and practice can alone be learnt from the study of the old masterpieces, and to make detailed drawings and accurately measure such examples. Investigated and dissected their construction, noticed how treatment had been modified to suit material, and style had been evolved jointly therefrom. Thus discovered the method by which the “old master-architects” met practical difficulties, and in this way, the moot points (which frequently arise at the present day with many violin makers) of construction and varnish have been solved. Claimed that his violins were a triumph of art. Believed in the principle of leaving sufficient wood to ensure a healthy tone in the beginning, and only to be matured by playing and age.

*H. A. Kretzschmar H.K.A.
Expert Violin Maker and Repairer
Chicago, Ill. fecit anno 19—*

- From: “Universal Dictionary of Violin and Bow Makers” by William Henley

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Description: This instrument has a two-piece maple back, showing medium flame descending from the centre joint. The sides are of similar wood, while the neck is of slightly plainer material. The front is of two pieces of spruce showing fine grain becoming broader towards the edges. The fittings are of boxwood. The varnish is of a red/brown colour over a yellow ground, in excellent condition and showing minimal wear from playing. The maple is slightly marked around the endpin hole, which has been bushed. The peg holes have also been bushed and the pegs refit. This work was done in our shop in 2009. There are no other visible repairs.

Back measurements:

Length: 358mm. Upper bout: 173mm. Middle bout: 116mm. Lower bout: 207mm.

October 13th, 2009