

For Immediate Release

September 9, 2005

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ROCKING AT ROCKEFELLER: AMERICAN GUITARS LEAD CHRISTIE'S FINE MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS SALE



**Fine Musical Instruments
October 14, 2005**

New York — Rare and highly-coveted guitars will strum the start of Christie's New York sale of *Fine Musical Instruments* on October 14, with the most desirable vintage Les Paul guitars ever to come to auction, and 16 guitars from the collection of Tony Mottola, a venerated composer and jazz guitarist who accompanied Frank Sinatra for decades. The sale also offers a classical selection of violins, cellos and bows, leading with a 1687 violin by Andrea Guarneri.

Gibson Incorporated, a solid-body electric guitar, Les Paul Model, 1959

Guitars

In the history of American guitars, not a more desirable solid-body electric guitar exists than the *Les Paul Model* made by the Gibson Company between the years of 1952 to 1960. This period of guitar making revolutionized the future of rock and roll and this sale offers three opportunities for collectors to own some of these collecting legends. From the first year of its production, and therefore with no serial number, the 1952 *Les Paul* has all the hallmark qualities, with its mahogany body, a single cut-away, and laminated maple top finished in gold colored lacquer (estimate: \$8,000-12,000). A similar and later model from 1954, now exhibiting the stud tail piece-bridge is also offered (estimate: \$7,000-9,000). The 1959 *Les Paul Standard* represents the pinnacle design made within this golden guitar period — with its cherry red sunburst maple design, a.k.a. 'flame top' finish,

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its impeccable condition, and its first appearance on the auction block, this rare guitar is a collector's dream (estimate: \$100,000-150,000).

More chances to own a piece of American music history are present with 16 guitars from the Collection of the Late Tony Mottola (1918-2004). In his 60-year career, this New Jersey native accompanied Frank Sinatra on his only solo guitar recording, *It's Sunday*. Mottola was an original band member in *The Tonight Show* with Johnny Carson, and he also arranged, accompanied and composed with other stars such as Perry Como, Rosemary Clooney, Johnny Mathis, Billie Holiday, among many others. Highlights from his personal collection include: a Gibson arch-top guitar, L-5, circa 1940, with a case bearing numerous Sinatra concert venue labels and accompanied with a photograph of Mottola on the set of *The Tonight Show*, (estimate: \$7,000-9,000); a Gibson arch-top electric guitar, style L-5P, 1940 the primary electric guitar Mottola used throughout his career (estimate: \$10,000-15,000); and the 1979 classical guitar by Jose Ramirez that he played to accompany Sinatra on *It's Sunday* (estimate \$4,000-6,000).

The invention of the *Byrdland* in 1955 marked yet another historic moment in guitar making when two musical pioneers, guitarist Billy Byrd of rock-a-billy fame and Nashville session player, Hank Garland, were asked by Gibson for their guidance and expertise in creating a new instrument. The result was a new, sleek, and smaller breed of electric guitar that allowed players comfort, speed and agility. A contraction of the last names Byrd and Garland, Gibson christened it the *Byrdland*. This example, made in 1959, was a custom instrument to Garland's specifications. It was his primary guitar before the 1961 automobile accident that ended his career, and it is sold with the original shipping invoice from Gibson as well as other documents relating to the provenance (estimate: \$10,000-15,000).

Violins

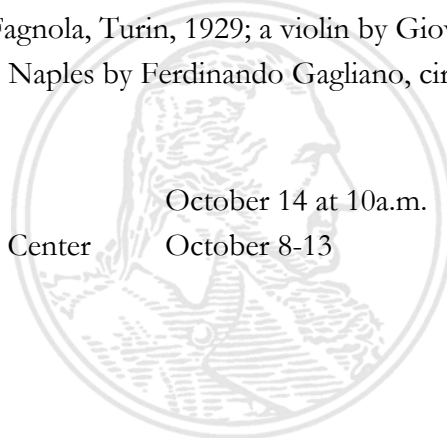
Harking back to the Italian lineage of violin history — from the Cremonese master, Andrea Guarneri, comes an exceptional violin made in 1687 (estimate: \$120,000-160,000). A contemporary and rival of Stradivari, Andrea Guarneri was the patriarch of a family that spanned three generations of Italian violin making. His style and design remained faithful to the training he and Antonio Stradivari received from the first master of Cremona, Nicolo Amati. Other splendid examples from the Italian makers include: a violin by Annibale Fagnola, Turin, 1929; a violin by Giovanni Floreno Guidante, Bologna, circa 1733; and a violin from Naples by Ferdinando Gagliano, circa 1780 (each estimated at \$50,000-70,000).

Auction: Fine Musical Instruments

October 14 at 10a.m.

Viewing: Christie's Galleries at Rockefeller Center

October 8-13



More information about Christie's sales of *Fine Musical Instruments* can be found on www.christies.com. All lots from the sale can be viewed online along with full catalogue descriptions on Lotfinder®, which also allows clients to leave absentee bids. www.christies.com provides information on more than 80 sale categories, buying and selling at auction, complete auction results, and Christie's international auction calendar.

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