

For Immediate Release

3 November 2004

Contact: Rhiannon Bevan-John 020.7752.3120 rbevan-john@christies.com

***RARE CELLO SOLD TODAY AT CHRISTIE'S FOR WORLD
RECORD £341,250***

Musical Instruments – 3 November 2004

South Kensington – A rare 18th century Italian cello made by Giovanni Battista Guadagnini, one of the world's finest cello makers, was sold today at Christie's Musical Instruments auction for £341,250, establishing a new world auction record for a Guadagnini cello. The buyer was the Dutch cellist Pieter Wispelwey.

The instrument had been hidden away for the last sixty years and was offered from the collection of a musician whose family acquired the cello in the 1940s. Made in Parma in 1760, the cello is in a stunning state of preservation and is one of only five Guadagnini cellos which have come to auction in the last twenty years.

Giovanni Battista Guadagnini (1711 – 1786) was the greatest maker of the Guadagnini family. For many years his name suffered as his works were confused with the lesser creations of his father Lorenzo. Gradually as a clearer picture of the son's workmanship emerged, Giovanni Battista Guadagnini has become acknowledged as one of the greatest makers of the eighteenth century.

By taking advantage of new string technology, Guadagnini realised that the cello could be reduced in size with no great reduction in the power of the sound. Widening the centre bouts and reducing the size of the top bouts made access to the fingerboard easier for the cellist. These changes, radical at the time and still unusual (if you place a Guadagnini cello against most other full-sized cellos the difference in size would be striking), have ensured an august following for his cellos.

In the spring of 1758, Guadagnini moved his family and tools from Milan to take up residence in the Duchy of Parma, seat of the Bourbon duke, don Filipe and a centre of Bourbon culture. Guadagnini had been invited to the court by Parma's chief minister, Du Tillot, and it appears was requested to make the instruments for the court orchestra. This cello was made at the start of Guadagnini's thirteen years in Parma, and is an incredibly

finely worked example. The sort of cello you one would expect from a maker eager to make his mark in a new city.

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Images available on request

Visit Christie's at www.christies.com

Christie's holds the world auction record for any musical instrument for the sale of the "Kreutzer" violin by Antonio Stradivari, which sold for £947,500 in April 1998 in London. Christie's holds three Musical Instruments sales a year in London and one in New York. While stringed instruments of the violin family generally dominate Christie's sales, fretted and wind instruments, as well as keyboard instruments up to circa 1820 also appear in the auctions.