



BASS WORLD

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CENTERFOLD

Steven Reiley, Editor

2003 ISB Luthier's Competition

This issue's Centerfold profiles the two Gold Medal winners of the 2003 International Society of Bassists Luthier's Competition. (For a detailed report on this tremendous event, please see the Luthier's Corner column, pg. 77.) In order to win a Gold Medal, an instrument or bow was required to be nominated by both of the two panels of distinguished judges, one panel assessing its workmanship and the other its tone. Receipt of a Gold Medal is considered very prestigious, not simply because it is the top award, but because neither committee was under any obligation to award a gold medal, unless they unanimously agreed it was deserved. (And in these types of competitions, years may sometimes pass without anyone winning the coveted prize.) For those who did not have a chance to see the instruments and bows or meet the luthiers in person in Richmond, the ISB is delighted to profile and introduce Daniel Hachez, of New Mexico and Thomas Dignan of Massachusetts.



Daniel Hachez

the field of bow making, and has spent the last twenty-five years working at his small shop in Boston and traveling through out the United States, Europe and Brazil studying the bows of previous masters and new makers. Since 1987, he has won 15 grand prizes, including 2 gold medals, at international competitions for bow makers. But after many years of focusing on violin, viola and cello bows, Thomas is returning to his 'roots' making bass bows. He says that much of his true inspiration was due to the enthusiasm and love of bass bows provided by his good friend and colleague Sue Lipkins, who has noted that very few contemporary bow makers make bass bows and that discussion and dialogue are essential to growth.

About the Gold Medal bow:

This German model bass bow combines features by H.R. Pfretzschner, Otto Hoyer and Thomas Dignan. Thomas says, "I had many Pfretzschner bass bows in the shop as I was beginning this project, so the head of my bow is a tribute to this master. With a German style bass frog it is so important the way the frog 'feels' in your hand. Your fingers, your palm, your thumb should all naturally caress the frog so that it dissolves into your hand and you only have the sensation of the complete bow. The small back sweep to the frog I first observed on an old Hoyer many years ago. I also increased the overall height of the frog because many players have complained to me about the small frogs on so many modern production bows, that cramp their fingers and hands. The increased height meant I had to work much slower to balance the weight, the camber and the final graduations of the stick. But the end result was worth all the effort!"

Bow specifications:
145 grams
length: 75.6 cm

For enquiries about this bow, or to place an order, contact Thomas Dignan, 295 Huntington Ave., #200, Boston, MA 02115, (617) 262-5511.

process, he discovered the lute and ended up supporting himself for ten years making lutes and other early instruments. After moving to New Mexico in 1972, Daniel met Don Robertson and in 1981, started working for him at Robertson's Violin Shop. He became the primary bass repairman in the shop, and remained there until 1998, at which time he branched off on his own, to build double basses.

For enquiries about this bass, or to place an order, contact Daniel Hachez at P.O. Box 895, Tijeras, NM 87059, (505) 281-1740.

About the Gold Medal bass:

Total length: 73 1/4 inches
Body length: 44 1/2 inches
Upper bout width: 21 1/4 inches
Lower bout width: 27 inches



Daniel Hachez

Daniel Hachez

Daniel Hachez's career as an instrument maker started in his early teen years, in Southern California. At the time, he was learning to play flamenco guitar and couldn't afford one that sounded good. With encouragement from his father and the guidance of a book ("Make Your Own Spanish Guitar" by A. P. Sharpe) Daniel made his first guitar while still in high school. In the

Thomas Dignan

The truth is about Thomas Dignan is that he was a bass player in a previous life! Before sawdust and wood chips took over his daily existence, he spent many hours working his way through the Nanny books and Simandl etudes; graduating from the Berklee College of Music in 1976. Encouraged by Lenny Harlos (the premiere Boston area bass luthier, now retired), Thomas decided to explore

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Gold Medal Winning Double Bass by Daniel Hachez

Photos by Justin Robertson



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Gold Medal Winning Bow by Thomas Dignan

