

SOPHIE TILL
1732 Gagliano violin



*Sophie
Till*



Photo F. Lammot Berlin Arts Scholarship

Photo Mary Anne Capone

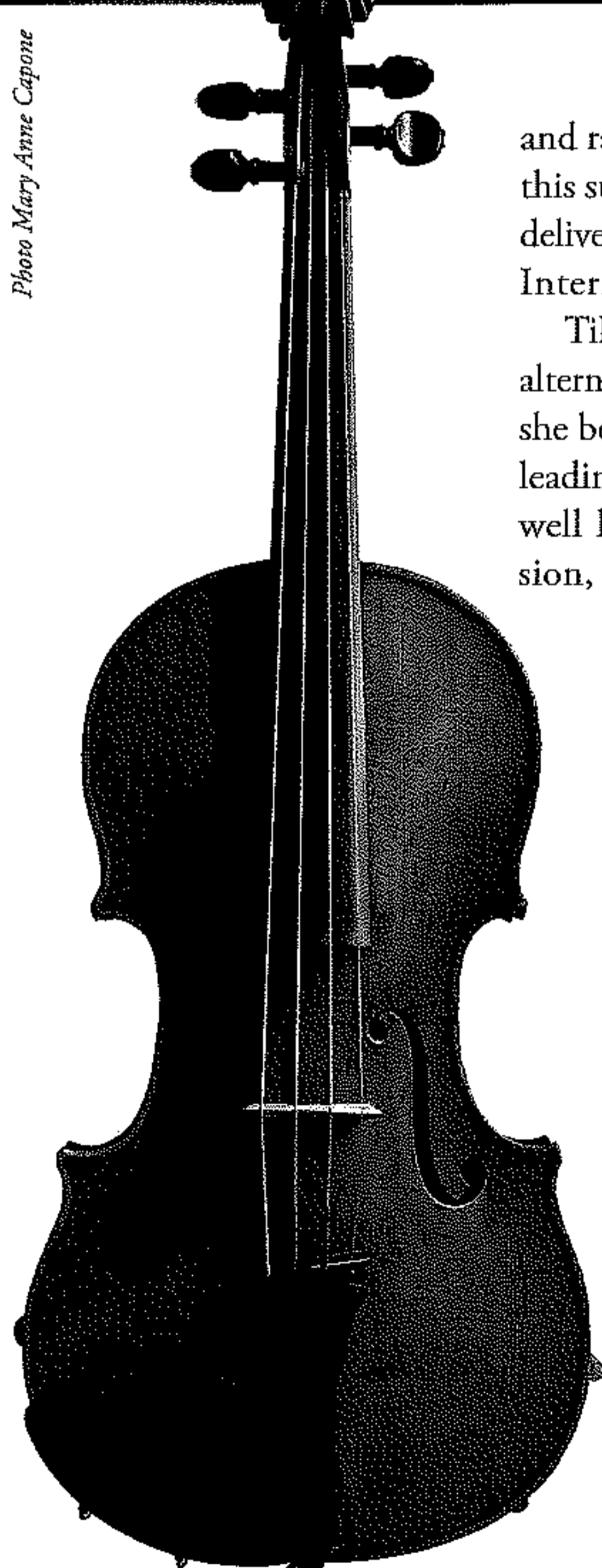


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VIOLINIST SOPHIE TILL has reflected at length on why she decided to pursue a musical career. 'With music so much part of the scenery, there was no real sense of becoming a musician – it was such an integrated process. Music and growing up are inseparable when you spend so much time playing music. It was more the reverse, that the practising and performing provided the therapy that led me to an awareness of being more human.' Till studied at London's Royal Academy of Music, and enjoyed a highly successful performing and teaching career in the UK and Europe before moving the focus of her activities to America. She teaches, performs regular recitals

and radio broadcasts with pianist Ron Stabinsky, and this summer she will expand her reach still further by delivering a series of lectures at the Golandsky Institute's International Summer Symposium at Princeton.

Till has recently become increasingly interested in an alternative approach to violin pedagogy. Three years ago she began working with pianist Edna Golandsky, the leading exponent of the Taubman Piano Technique, well known to pianists. Till says: 'In the first session, Edna solved a violin problem in a matter of

minutes. I quickly realised that here was an approach that could not only identify and itemise the often invisible movements that underlie a virtuoso technique, but the way that the movements interact and go into music making at the highest level. Through the Golandsky Institute I saw a pedagogical approach that had been developed to a phenomenal level of clarity and had a power to communicate that I had never seen before. While the geography and look of the violin are different, the laws governing coordinate motion to play the instrument are the same.'

But the need for a fine instrument cannot be avoided, however rounded a musician's technique may be. Till initially secured a J. Hill violin through a syndicated trust, which she was eventually able to purchase herself. She has now moved on to another instrument, a very fine Gagliano, which she acquired in a similarly gradual manner thanks to the patience of another music lover, Gael Francais. Till recognizes just how important the ability to acquire her first instrument was in helping her to reach this goal: 'Without the Trust I would not have been able to make that next move to the Gagliano and I am very grateful for both opportunities.'

Till's Gagliano is a constant delight to her. 'The first time I played it, it was just like meeting my husband. It made me come out in goose pimples!' She continues, 'It can do anything, which is wonderful fuel for the imagination and opens up limitless possibilities.'

Either way, Till is keen to stress her utmost respect for her instrument, and voices the philosophy that underpins her self-awareness: 'To know that its life will far outreach my own, and that

my relationship with it, while important to me, is but another transition for the violin, is a very humbling concept. I'm sharing in the continuum and that is a special connection through time.'

Mark Austin

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