For Immediate Release . . . May 3, 2005

ANDREA AMATI'S 500TH BIRTHDAY . . .

SECRETS, LIVES & VIOLINS OF THE
GREAT CREMONA MAKERS 1505-1744

The National Music Museum on the campus of The University of South Dakota in Vermillion, South Dakota, USA, will celebrate the 500th birthday of Andrea Amati, in whose workshop in Cremona, Italy, the form of the instruments of the violin family as we know them today first crystallized, by hosting an international conference – The Secrets, Lives, and Violins of the Great Cremona Makers 1505-1744 – Friday-Monday, July 1-4, 2005.

The aim of the program is to bring together individuals who have been at the forefront of archival research in Cremona to share their findings, in a setting amidst some of the earliest, best pre-served, and historically most important instruments known to survive, including the NMM's quartet of instruments by Andrea Amati, violins by the second and third generations of the Amati family, and instruments by Andrea Guarneri, Antonio Stradivari, and other prominent Cremonese makers.

The program will be structured around major presentations by Carlo Chiesa (Milan), John Dilworth (London), Andrew Dipper (Minneapolis), Roger Hargrave (Bremen), and Duane Rosengard (Philadelphia), with shorter
contributions by other experts, round tables, and similar opportunities for discussion among and between all who attend.

Ray Erickson, Professor of Music at the Aaron Copland School of Music at Queen's College in New York, will place violin-making in the broader cultural context of the north Italian peninsula and neighboring influences in the 16th and 17th centuries.

Sergiu Luca, one of the premier violinists of our time, will perform music of the period, along with Byron Schenkman, Artistic Director of the Seattle Baroque Orchestra, who has recorded critically acclaimed CDs on the NMM's harpsichord by Giacomo Ridolfi, Italy, ca. 1662-1682.

There will also be opportunities to hear Sergiu Luca play some of the great instruments from the NMM's Witten-Rawlins Collection of Early Italian Stringed Instruments for the first time since the NMM acquired the Collection in 1984.

Participants will also enjoy an old-fashioned South Dakota pig roast, as well as lots of North Italian cooking, including a lavish Cremonese banquet to conclude the event on Monday night. It promises to be a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

The $495 registration fee includes all events, an illustrated souvenir program book that will soon become a collector's item, and all of the meals, beginning with an opening reception with food and wine at the historic home of USD President and Mrs. James W. Abbott on Friday, July 1, at
5:30 p.m., and ending with the Cremonese banquet at the Buffalo Run Winery — plus fireworks — on Monday night, July 4.

The event is being coordinated by Claire Givens of Claire Givens Violins, Minneapolis, a NMM Trustee. Major underwriting is being provided by four prominent American violin dealers: Chris Reuning (Boston), Jim Warren (Chicago), Bob Bein and Geoffrey Fushi (Chicago), and David Kerr (Portland).

Participation will be limited to the first 100 registrants. Registration forms and housing information are available on the NMM website at www.usd.edu/smm (go to the bottom of the home page and click on Conference, July 1-4, 2005).