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LATE AUTUMN 2009 NEWSLETTER

FROM THE U.K.'s LARGEST SUPPLIER OF VIOLIN FAMILY PRODUCTS

5/11/2009

As I write, I am minded to think that on this day in 1605 a certain Mr G. Fawkes intended to end the life of King James 1st in a rather dastardly manner. The fact that he failed means that this country obviously took a different path to the one he had planned. Whether his plan would have meant that his version of 2009 would have found that we were not in the recession that we now find ourselves in, or not, is of course a moot point, but obviously things would have been very different. Would we have had the Victorian Era which showed the world a very inventive U.K. and of course the Industrial Revolution? I guess not as Queen Victoria would not have acceded to the throne. Would we be using computers, or would they even have been invented and horror of horrors would there be a World Wide Web, or a new phonetic spelling system to make keying in easier? Well the last one I find incomprehensible, can anyone tell me what 'LOL' means? I know that I am a bit of a luddite, but this just goes way over my head. I still think a telephone is for making calls on my way of an audible communication system, I have yet to fathom out texting let alone half of what the little plastic device in my pocket is capable of doing. Anyway I am fortunate that I am in an industry that is traditional, and to some extent we see little in the way of changes, although not the same with innovations. We see plenty of them. The Chinese way of working has completely changed the way that quality instruments and bows are made. Whilst historically (well say 20-30 years ago) the Chinese instruments were not a byword for quality, rather the opposite I have to say, no one could say that now. The consternation in Cremona every year when the Chinese makers take the top prizes has to be seen to be believed. One of our Luthiers when setting up an instrument stated that there was no point in him making instruments now, as the instruments that he was seeing from China now were amazingly good, and priced well below what he could make them for, and that is even if he could get hold of the quality of naturally air dried timber that the quality Chinese instruments tend to be made from. This from a man with prizes for the quality of his instruments.

In the industry we all know that the prices that we are currently paying for these instruments can only go one way, and that is of course UP. As China becomes more of a force on the world stage, and its people demand higher wages, we will inevitably see large price hikes, and that comes on top of the increases of last year from the collapse of the UK pound, which one must say hasn't really seen much of an improvement. Add to that the cost of shipping all the way from China, which with the environmental taxes that are either being or will be imposed, my guess is that over the next few years we could be looking at a doubling of prices.

To this end, and as an incentive to enable players to upgrade before these price rises, we have increased our stock of Quality Chinese Instruments and bows to unprecedented levels. To us they are a better investment than the banks!

**JPB Music, The Coach House,
66a Clifton Road, Weston-Super-Mare,
N. Somerset, BS23 1BW**

[email: paul@jpbmusic.wanadoo.co.uk](mailto:paul@jpbmusic.wanadoo.co.uk) or sales@jpbmusic.com

TEL: 01934 628600

FAX: 01934 613939

Anyway what this is leading up to is a bit of an amazing offer, which I cannot see that we will ever be able to repeat.

From now and until Christmas 2009 we are going to discount ALL of our Quality Violins and Cellos and ALL Instrument Bows by 10% YES TEN PERCENT!!!

There are obviously conditions to this; when we say Quality Violins and Cellos, this covers New Violins in the Price Range £300 to £2000; £1000 to £4000 with New Cellos, and ALL instrument bows in the price range £300 and up. As we have around 400 violins and about 450 bows in this price range alone, we should be able to help most looking for an upgrade. There is also a good selection of good Old Instruments, which we will be able to offer some kind of discounts on, although the amount depends on the instrument chosen.

As you all know ALL of our instruments are Luthier set-up, so you can be sure that they are as good, if not better than other Violin shops. We spare no blushes in being able to promote our Luthiers as being the best. As a member of the BBC Symphony Orchestra said after one of his purchases of a Quality Chinese Instrument; 'you never let me down, yet another superb instrument' High praise indeed from a Professional player. In fact when he had an accident recently when he tripped over an unprotected cable in the Albert Hall, smashing his violin, he was eternally grateful that it was a new Chinese instrument, not his irreplaceable Italian Master Instrument. He came down, tried another of the same make, and went away a happy man. Fortunately his arm is healing well and has not affected his playing. Please quote "SPECIAL INSTRUMENT WEB OFFER" when phoning us.

Regrettably as there are so many permutations of size with Violas we are unable to carry such a comprehensive stock of these, so the offer cannot extend to them, and our Bass stock is restricted due to space limitations, but if you are interested in any of these instruments, call us and I am sure that we can do something to assist.

I am sorry that we can't really extend this offer to the less expensive violins, cellos and bows, as we have already held the prices of many of those to encourage new players to start on their journey with these fascinating instruments. We have of course amazingly large stocks of these as well and at a price that will not continue after 1st January 2010.

Remember that we are always pleased to welcome you to try out our instruments in our trying out rooms, but please, during this busy period in particular, please phone before coming to ensure that we can accommodate you at the time you require. We like to be able to give you our full attention. We will also try to be available on some Saturdays, but this is STRICTLY BY APPOINTMENT.

As on January 1st VAT again reverts to 17½% not only will this special discount be finished, but all prices will be going up 2½% guaranteed. There is nothing we can do about it, so may I suggest that there is no better time to upgrade than now. Whatever you buy will be an investment, with a better potential to increase in value than money in the Bank. We will of course consider part exchanges, but we always reserve the right to decline if we feel that we have enough instruments in that price range. Of course if your previous instrument came from us, then we will of course honour our usual part exchange guarantees.

We are being frequently asked when we intend formally re-issuing our mail Order Catalogue, and I regret to say, still not for a while, certainly not until we can see some end to the price fluctuations. We have been advising for some time, that to re-issue our catalogue until there is some economic stability would be crazy, regrettably not all companies think like us, so inevitably any new printed catalogues hitting the streets will be incorrect before you even receive them! As always our Updated Draft Catalogue is available to download, and print out if you so wish, and we will of course always try to keep it up to date, and in any case honour any prices listed there or on the Website itself, which should be always current.

During the Postal dispute, we are trying to ensure that your orders still arrive in good time. We have various schemes in operation, which we can offer depending what it is you order. Please ask therefore if your order is urgent, and we will work out the best option to ensure that you get your order the next day.

Paul Corder

Partner **TEL: 01934 628600** **FAX: 01934 613939**

[email: paul@jpbmusic.wanadoo.co.uk](mailto:paul@jpbmusic.wanadoo.co.uk) or sales@jpbmusic.com

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