

THE CULT SHOP

bridgewood & neitzert

This musical box of a store is one of London's best sources for new and antique stringed instruments – and a repair shop with near magical powers

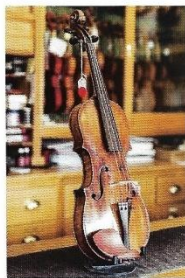
Although the once beloved neighbourhood jazz club was turned into a fast-food joint years ago and the Hackney bohemians have long been replaced by double buggies and cupcake vendors, one fixture of old still remains on Church Street in London's Stoke Newington: violin shop Bridgewood & Neitzert. "We moved here from Dalston over 20 years ago," says co-founder Gary Bridgewood (pictured above). The business began with four of us, all makers of stringed instruments. We used to have two workrooms above a drug dealer and eventually we bought this place from a local Greek entrepreneur who used to drive around in an open-top pink Cadillac."

The shop today is several things: it's one of the UK's best sources for new and antique stringed instruments; it is also a repair shop and a restoration and reselling business. "I always have someone's violin opened up at my bench," says Bridgewood, "assessing it for repair or sale. We are the only specialists in London and one of just a few places in the world that repair baroque instruments; they have different shapes, angles and ridges, with raw gut instead of metal-covered strings." The store also sells modern versions of classic Stradivarius violins (from around £8,500), as well as such specialised finishing touches as an Artonus quart violin case (£290) with a burgundy velvet interior, or some ruby-red Melos rosin (£16) to treat the hair on a bow. Pricing for repairs varies greatly – from £50 to £10,000. "I recently worked on an 18th-century Montagnana viola, which was a superb experience," says Bridgewood. Many family heirlooms make their way to his

bench and then the store's shelves, but much footfall is also from orchestras and soloists.

The stock is as rarefied as fine jewellery, split between the work of modern makers and restored antiques. A 2016 baroque violin by Parisian maker Giovanna Chitto is £8,000, while a 17th-century Grancino (pictured below) costs £50,000. Some of the most extraordinary instruments sell for even more: a 1700s violin with an ornate back, attributed to the Gagliano family of Naples, is £70,000. "We often have modern English instruments on sale from the low thousands," says Bridgewood. "Most people we employ are makers, and we represent them. Their violins sell from £5,000 to £11,000, and cellos go up to around £25,000. It takes about eight weeks to build an instrument."

Much of what makes the store such a delight is its interior. There are three floors and the place looks like a magic realism novel brought to life – sumptuously detailed shelves and cabinets seem centuries old. Everything is, in fact, the work of late master joiner Michael White, who was invited to use the repair rooms and woodwork machines when they first moved in. "He said he'd like to do something for us first," says Bridgewood. "He didn't stop until he died. We salvaged a lot of oak and exotic woods from an industrial site, and he turned them into woodwork with incredible detail, including brackets in the shape of violins." The store was a labour of love for White, reflecting the time and craft that goes into the instruments sold here today. **MARK C O'FLAHERTY**
146 Stoke Newington Church Street,
London N16 (020-7249 9398;
bridgewoodandneitzert.london).



FOR GOODNESS' SAKE

a trinity of charitable channels

On September 27 at Christie's New York, the first 20 lots of a postwar-to-present fine art sale will be auctioned in aid of Global Wildlife Conservation (GWC), a charity dedicated to preserving endangered species and habitats (two current projects include empowering rangers in Zimbabwe to combat poaching and protecting the Javan rhino, of which there are just 67 left). The sale forms part of Art in Acres, an ongoing collaboration between Christie's and GWC, with all proceeds going towards the charity's endeavours to buy – and transform into a national reserve – thousands of acres in Guatemala that form the last, large-scale, unprotected cloud forest in Central America. Artists featured will include Cindy Sherman, Ed Ruscha, Robert Longo, the Haas Brothers and Thomas Struth (with estimates from \$12,000 to \$200,000) and a number of non-profit partners have pledged to donate three times the value of the profits from every sale made. christies.com.



“Perhaps they don't matter at all. Perhaps they do” – with the words on this necklace, conceptual artist Lawrence Weiner asks us to reflect on the global humanitarian crisis

Katharina de Vaivre,
director of Gems and Ladders

Human Rights Necklace, £570, from gemsandladders.com;
10 per cent of proceeds go to Human Rights Watch (hrw.org)

Being “boxed in” is how the late Tom Isaacs, co-founder of The Cure Parkinson's Trust, described living with the neurological disease that affects 10 million people. And the idea of being trapped in a box was the inspiration for his Cure² project last year that saw leading artists and architects each transform a 20cm cubed glass box into a work of art to be sold in aid of the trust. More than £300,000 was raised, and this year, in association with Bonhams and Artwise, the exhibition returns with works by, among others, Ron Arad, Peter Blake, John Pawson, Edmund de Waal and Anish Kapoor going on display to the public from October 26 to 28 at Bonhams London (private view on October 25). The works will be on sale from 8am on October 26 at cure3.co.uk and all profits will fund research into new treatments for Parkinson's. cure3.co.uk. **MARIANNA GIUSTI**