

INTERNATIONAL PERNAMBUCO CONSERVATION INITIATIVE

A solution to the diminishing pernambuco forests

by Julene Flink, Givens Violins

The International Pernambuco Conservation Initiative (IPCI) represents 23 countries and its diverse membership is comprised of bowmakers, violinmakers, musicians, teachers, music lovers, instrument and bow retailers and conservationists who are concerned about the diminishing pernambuco forests. In the US, there are over 400 instrument shops, including Givens Violins, involved in the effort. Givens Violins donates one dollar from every bow repair to IPCI, and their customers receive an IPCI postcard and sticker for their contribution. This money is used to support FUNBRASIL, a conservation organization in Pernambuco, Brazil, that plants 10,000 Pau-brasil seedlings each year. Funds are also given to Programa Pau-Brasil, a five-year research and reforestation plan.

For over 250 years the wood of the Pau-brasil tree, known more commonly in the instrument world as pernambuco, has been the material of choice for making fine bows. Pernambuco bows embody the perfect blend of strength and flexibility that professional musicians, instructors and serious students count on to bring out their instruments' best qualities. Hundreds of years ago, Pau-brasil trees flourished in the Brazilian Atlantic Forest, which currently occupies only 5% of its original range. Until the mid-1800s, tons of pernambuco trees were cut to be used to create a red dye. More recently, they are being removed to make way for sugarcane cultivation, grazing land for cattle and other agricultural endeavors. Fearing that

there would soon be no pernambuco left, an international group of bowmakers, whose very livelihoods depend on this amazing natural resource, banded together to form the IPCI.

When asked about the success of IPCI's efforts, Lynn Hannings, President of IPCI-USA, responded, "We feel that our efforts are

extremely important. It is important to educate musicians and those involved in the greater musical community within our own countries as well as taking positive actions to preserve this species in Brazil. The sticker campaign was designed to include musicians, teachers and students in the reforestation effort and has been met with great enthusiasm. Deforestation of the Atlantic Rainforest is a real and serious threat to the future of pernambuco and the musical traditions that make such a contribution to our lives. By joining together, we are making a significant contribution to reversing this alarming trend. Every time I travel to Brazil I am more committed to our work as I see positive results."

Information about membership and donations can be found on the IPCI-USA's website <http://www.ipci-usa.org/index.html>.

Julene Flink is an Administrative Assistant at Claire Givens Violins, Inc., which is proud to be a part of IPCI. Givens' customers have enthusiastically provided their support to this important initiative. ♪

