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Bonsels, Waldemar

Ambach, 1950-09-21

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21st September, 1950

Mr. Robert J. McKeever
Attorney at Law
219 Westchester Avenue
Port Chester N.Y.

Dear Mr. McKeever.

We were very pleased to receive your letter of 12th September a few days ago and the news that you are keeping well and are remembering us with the same feelings of friendship as of old.

With regard to the violins, your kind interest in them is reassuring me about their fate. But I would very much regret if no way could be found for the instruments to remain in your hands. You don't mention anything in your letter whether the violins are appealing to you and whether you might yourself be interested to have them.

Regarding the question of documents testifying to the original workmanship of both violins, it would only be possible to forward to you the judgment of German experts of renown. But such documents could only be obtained at this end if the experts could examine the instruments themselves. The Testore has been privately owned over three generations and has since been with me for some twenty years. There is also no doubt that the Varotti is an original creation of the master's whose label (with his name) is marked on the violin. Both instruments have repeatedly passed through the hands of people whose judgment and talents as violinists don't allow of any doubt as to the original workmanship of the instruments. In both cases I am prepared to give full guarantee that the instruments are genuine originals and made by these two masters.

I think that in New York City there should be a good many reliable experts who, without any difficulty, would be able to confirm the original character of the violins. Apart from that, the ultimate value of the instruments is of course dependent upon and decided by the quality and beauty of tone of each instrument - a test which could evidently only be made by a master violinist.

Taking all this into consideration, I can, in response to your letter, furnish you at present only with the international valuation of both instruments - the valuation currently in use regarding well-preserved and healthy instruments of this type - two characteristics which both violins comply with. The Testore is considered by connoisseurs, collectors and violinists to represent the international value of 4,000/- Francs (Swiss), the Varotti has an international value of 2,000 Francs (Swiss). At the time of purchasing them, I paid considerably more for both instruments, but the sums indicated represent the average international market value for such instruments. The valuation of each instrument is at the lowest rate possible and is from the year 1925. The value of each of the instruments has risen in the meantime.

In case that, for one reason or another, it should be inconvenient to you, dear Mr. McKeever, to purchase the instruments yourself or if it should be too much trouble for you to find a buyer in New York on this basis, I would like to ask you for permission to send to you Miss Wally Krauss of Milwaukee who would come to collect the instruments from you. Old Italian violins are at present in great demand in England and in the States, and I think that Miss Krauss won't have any difficulty in finding a buyer for both of them. Would you please write to me quite frankly how you think about this and what you would like to do. Your wishes will of course have preference with me over the wishes of others interested in this matter. In case of a sale, whichever way it may be negotiated, I shall of course assume full responsibility and guarantee for the instruments being genuine - that

is to say I would be prepared to take them back any time that it should transpire that the labels in the violins are not originals and that my present assurances should prove to be incorrect.

With my very best regards, also from Mrs. Rose-Marie, we remain
always yours