



Giovanni Lucchi
BOWMAKING
Passion of a Lifetime

“If there’s one thing I’ve learned after so many years of work,
it is that you can never stop.
Every result opens new doors onto new horizons,
just waiting to be discovered.”

Giovanni Lucchi

GIOVANNI LUCCHI, born in 1942 in Cesena, a town in Emilia Romagna, died suddenly in Cremona in August 2012, shortly after writing this brief autobiography. These pages contain his memoirs, his principles and his projects, all of which have become his legacy. He has left an invaluable treasure for those who will follow the path he has traced with intelligence, creativity and great passion.

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Preface by Domenico Barrilà



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Preface

Like vocations, some occupations are not a matter of choice, unless it is a question of survival. They just “are”; they exist. Giovanni Lucchi dealt with vibrations, and it could not have been otherwise, for he himself was the personification of vibration.

That he played a stringed instrument or made bows was merely the extension of his own natural, emotive way of being. He vibrated, without any affectation. He anticipated the most sophisticated theories in physics, even one of the latest, dealing with strings that would seem to have been developed especially for him. Roughly speaking, those infinitely tiny compounds, prefigured by the schol-

ars, could have formed something like a primordial broth, where invisible strings move around, creating all that can be seen around us. They are so small that we are unable to see them, even with the help of the most advanced instruments, but apparently they really do exist. And, what is more, they determine the characteristics of every particle, from mass to color, from taste to electric charges, and who knows how many other different things. If it were not for these tiny, vibrant filaments, the universe would be a waxworks, or it might not exist at all. Life itself originates in these incessant vibrations and cannot continue unless they are replicated every day, in their own specific dimension.

That was how Giovanni Lucchi's universe worked. That was why he understood vibrations better than anyone else, and knew how to create things that could produce the best vibrations out of every instrument. A bow, after all, is like a zero in mathematics; it is of no use without an instrument. But without a bow, even a Stradivari is noth-

ing more than a banal mixture of wood, glue and some accessories. He was well aware of this, and it was to vibrations that he dedicated his whole life, the life of a musician. The history of the bow, and of history itself, has taken another step forward. He was a hybrid, both an artist and a scientist, thanks to his personal scientific method.

The slightest stimulus, however insignificant, was sufficient for him to establish connections where others could only see irreconcilable, irrelevant, farfetched phenomena. He used to tell how he first got the idea of the LucchiMeter. It was when he saw a documentary about the use of sonar waves in measuring the depth of the sea. That was enough for him to solve the problem of the “pernambuco lottery”, the type of Russian roulette responsible for destroying hundreds of hours of painstaking labour, when what had appeared to be an artistic masterpiece turned out to be an acoustic disaster. It was almost as if Leonardo had painted the Mona Lisa on a canvas of dust that was blown

away by the wind at the end of the day. That was the case with bow making before the invention of this device that can measure the elasticity of the wood to be used. Before that, nothing was known until the horsehair and the strings finally came together; and then the verdict was final. At that stage, nothing could be done; there was no remedy. But he was an anxious person, and anxiety is nothing more than a particular vibration. He could never wait for long. The anxiety caused by waiting was the worst of all. A remedy had to be found and without delay.

He was a great observer. He knew that observation is, in itself, a science. That is why, whatever path in life he might have chosen, the result would have been the same. He would have generated mutations, because he had an unshakeable faith in the “possibilities” of mankind, and in the matter. Everything can be affronted and resolved. It is only a question of finding the right path, and there always is a path.

Recently he had the idea that there was a way to deal with his heart problems. “Now I’ll go home and I’ll think about it”, he used to say to his family.

And if he had had more time, he would certainly have come up with something. The heart has much in common with the sort of man Giovanni was – a muscle that lives on rhythms and pulsations, following some inexplicable cyclical order, becoming turbulent and then calming down. It was a struggle between experts on vibrations and, for once, the bow maker suffered defeat, at the hands of the heart.

It is true Giovanni Lucchi was a philosopher. He was one of those erudite men who existed before the breakdown of science into various specializations. Whenever he observed something closely, the matter would begin to vibrate in a particular way, and that was the start of a new adventure.

However, like all philosophers who are looking far ahead, he risked slipping, not so much on the proverbial banana skin as on ‘animated matter’.

But in this case, once again, he was lucky. On his path he met a fine woman, Claudia, who bore him five children and enabled him to reconcile his geniality with everyday life (something well known to be tricky ground for a genius).

Domenico Barrilà