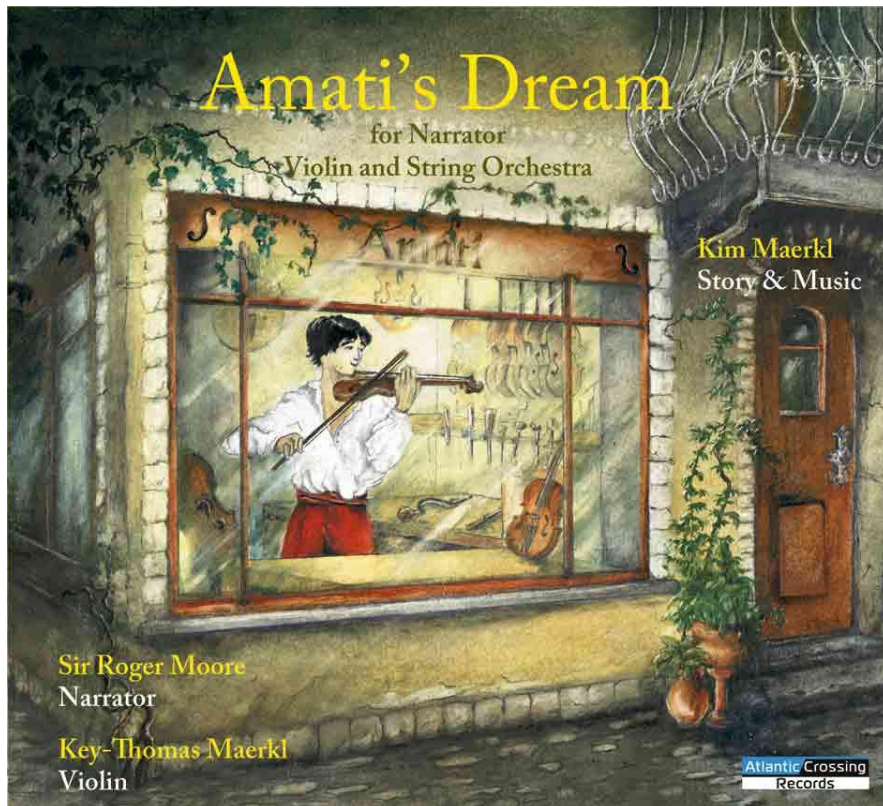


Teacher's Guide

Amati's Dream

for

Narrator, Violin & String Orchestra



Amati's Dream takes place in Cremona, Italy in the year 1666. The apprentice Raphael is learning to make violins in the shop of Nicolò Amati. Raphael enjoys his work, but he secretly yearns to be a violinist. His family cannot afford an instrument or music lessons, so Raphael tries his best to be content with working in the violin shop. Will Raphael fulfill his dream?

The story is multi-layered and thought provoking. The children are introduced to the fascinating and magical world of the violin through narration and music. The information in the story is woven into the narrative and very accessible. The music is melodic and easy to comprehend.

**Atlantic Crossing
Records**

www.atlantic-crossing.com

Nicolo Amati

Nicolò Amati was born in 1596 and died in 1684. He was an Italian violin maker; they are also known as luthiers. Amati built instruments over 300 years ago by candlelight, and without electric tools. Today, his instruments are very rare and extremely valuable. Nicolò Amati lived in the time known as the Renaissance; the word means rebirth. It is the time between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Renaissance was a time for the rebirth of science, education, music, art, and literature. The changes provided a better life for the people.

Apprentice

Raphael was an apprentice in the shop of Nicolò Amati. An apprentice trains for a craft or profession while working for an employer, as opposed to someone who learns by attending school. Often, the apprentice worked for his employer in exchange for lodging, food and training. The apprenticeship system began in the Middle Ages. Most apprentices began their training between the age of twelve and fourteen. Raphael was twelve years old when he worked for Amati as an apprentice. Benjamin Franklin was also twelve years old when he was apprenticed to his brother in 1718 to learn printing.

Can you think of other professions today that require apprenticeships?

Electrician, plumber carpenter...

String instrument making is still learned through apprenticeship programs, although today the training occurs in a classroom as well as the violin shop.

Discuss the Story

Where in Italy does the story take place? In what year?

Cremona in the year 1666

Where does the apprentice Raphael work?

Nicolò Amati's violin shop

What kind of tools are used for making violins?

A knife is used for carving the sound holes into the top of the instrument. These holes are shaped like the letter f. Chisels are used for sculpting the shiny brown snail perched proudly upon the neck, called the scroll.

What kind of trees is Amati looking for in the forest?

Maple and Pine

What was Raphael's secret wish?

He wished to be a violinist.

What was Nicolò Amati's secret wish?

To make the most beautiful sounding violin in the world.

Why did Raphael name his favorite violin - Tiger Violin?
Because it had vivid red stripes across the back.

When did Raphael receive his new violin?
On Christmas Eve in the year 1666

Vocabulary Words

Ask the students if they can define the following words that appear in the story:

Kimono
Nib
Cremona
Varnish
Apprentice
Chisel
Bow
Instrument
Examine
Fingerboard
Scroll

The Music

Listen to the CD several times, and have the students take notes when listening for the second or third time.

Ask the students: Did you like the music? Did it portray the mood of the story? What is your favorite piece and why? Can you describe your favorite piece: happy, sad, exciting, contemplative, rich...

What instruments do you hear on the CD?
A violin alone, violins together, violas, cellos, double basses, piano

What is a composer?
A person who creates music. The composer of this piece is Kim Maerkl; she was born in 1961. Many classical music composers lived centuries ago. Can you name another composer who wrote classical music?

Ask each student to compose a short melody, then whistle or hum the tune.

How does a violin make a sound?
By drawing the bow across the strings; this causes the strings to vibrate. This vibration is transmitted to the body of the violin, which allows the sound to radiate into the surrounding air.

How many strings does a violin have?
Four

What kind of music do you listen to? Have the students discuss their favorite music and describe why they like it.

Other Famous People of the Time

William Shakespeare, English author and poet (1564–1616) and Galileo Galilei, Italian astronomer (1564-1642) lived at the same time as Nicolò Amati during a period of time known as the Renaissance.

What do you think people ate during this period in time?

Peasants usually ate black bread, and soup made from scraps of food. They also ate mush, which is like oatmeal today. Meat was very expensive, and was rarely eaten by peasants. Wealthy people ate lamb, chicken, pheasant, venison, rabbit, turkey, ham, and fish. They also ate swans, peacocks, and cranes. Fruits, jellies nuts, and cheese were part of the wealthy person's menu. The water in the cities was very dirty so people drank beer and wine.

The Renaissance was an age of exploration. Christopher Columbus made his great voyage to America during this time!

Gutenberg invented the printing press, making books available to many people. Before the printing press was invented books were written by hand and were very rare. Most people could not read before the invention of the printing press because books were not available to them.

Worksheets

Map of Italy-Find Cremona

Discover the Violin Shop

Draw a Scene from the Story

Pretend to be a Music Critic and Write a Review of the CD

Parts of the Violin

Use the Picture Above to Help You Draw the Violin

Write Your Own Story or Poem About the Violin

Review the CD

Facts About the Violin

Learn to be a Great Narrator! The story manuscript is included.

Free Poster for the Classroom

Cremona is the city in Italy where the story takes place.

Can you find Cremona on the Map?



Italy is located on the continent of _____

Make a list of what you see in the violin shop.

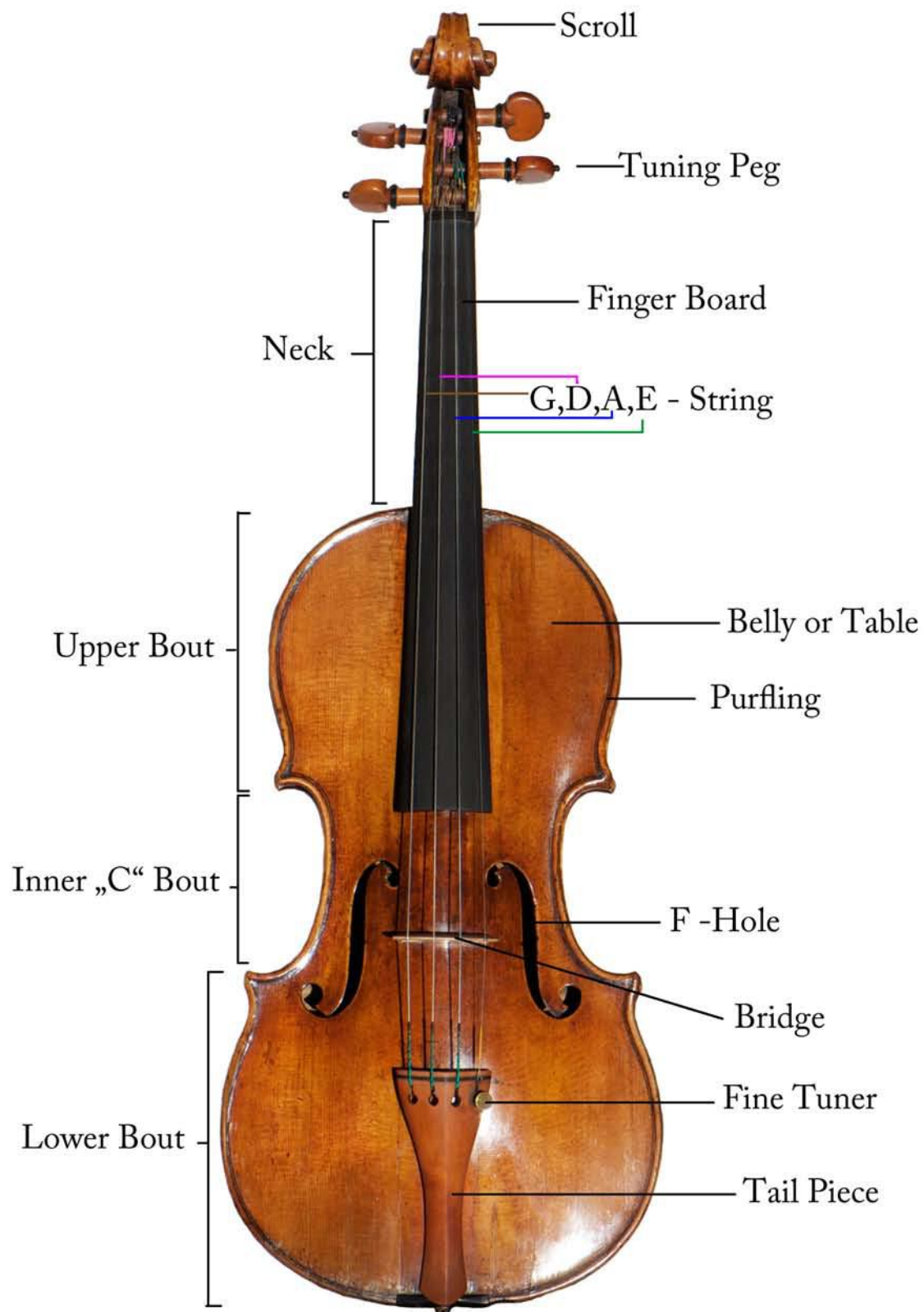


Draw a scene from the story that includes a violin.



Pretend to be a music critic and write a review of the CD.

Parts of the Violin



Draw a violin and name five of its parts.

Review the CD.

Facts About the Violin

The violin belongs to a family of stringed instruments. There are four important instruments in the violin family: Violin, Viola, Cello, and Double Bass.

The violin is the smallest and highest pitched instrument in the violin family.

The violin is most often used in classical music, but violinists can also play jazz, pop and folk music. There are even electric violins.

A violin is played with a bow or plucked.

The violin bow uses up to 150 hairs from a horse's tail.

The violinist can change the pitch by pressing down on the string with the left hand.

The violin has four strings.

The name violin comes from the Latin word Vitula, which means stringed instrument.

A person who plays a violin is called a violinist or a fiddler.

A person who makes or repairs violins is called a Luthier.

The strings used to be made from the gut of animals, today they are made of steel and nylon.

The oldest violins were made in the 1500s. They are over 500 years old.

Some of the best violins were made in the 1600s and 1700s by Antonio Stradivari and Nicolo Amati. They are two of the world's greatest violin makers.

Stradivari violins are very costly; they often sell for millions of dollars. There are about 600 violins made by Stradivari in the world today.

Violins come in a variety of sizes. Young children can rent or buy a very small violin.

The violin is made from many types of wood. The top is made of spruce, the back is made of maple and the neck is made of ebony and maple.

Fill in the blanks using the following words:

Smallest 500 bow Stradivari viola Vitula violinist gut left electric horse's
four Luthier 600 maple variety

The violin belongs to a family of stringed instruments. There are four important instruments in the violin family: Violin, _____, Cello, and Double Bass.

The violin is the _____ and highest pitched instrument in the violin family.

The violin is most often used in classical music, but violinists can also play jazz, pop and folk music. There are also _____ violins.

A violin is played with a _____ or plucked.

The violin bow uses up to 150 hairs from a _____ tail.

The violinist can change the pitch by pressing down on the string with the _____ hand.

The violin has _____ strings.

The name violin comes from the Latin word _____, which means stringed instrument.

A person who plays a violin is called a _____ or a fiddler.

A person who makes or repairs violins is called a _____.

The strings used to be made from the _____ of animals, today they are made of steel and nylon.

The oldest violins were made in the 1500s. They are over _____ years old.

Some of the best violins were made in the 1600s and 1700s by Antonio _____ and Nicolo Amati. They are two of the world's greatest violin makers.

Stradivari violins are very costly; they often sell for millions of dollars. There are about _____ violins made by Stradivari in the world today.

Violins come in a _____ of sizes. Young children can rent or buy a very small violin.

The violin is made from many types of wood. The top is made of spruce, the back is made of _____ and the neck is made of ebony and maple.

Narration

Narrating a story is an art.

What makes a great narrator

A narrator should draw the listener into the story by speaking slowly and clearly.

A narrator must use correct pronunciation for all the words in the story.

A narrator should be able speak at many different volumes from soft to loud. The words must come to life and should be spoken expressively.

A narrator should hold the attention of the listener through his interpretation of the words. We must hear the words smiling or crying. The mood of the story must be expressed through inflections in the voice.

Use a colored pen to write instructions above the words in the story: soft, loud, fast, slow, happy, sad, angry. This will help you to remember to speak expressively when narrating in front of an audience.

What did you like or dislike about the narrator on the CD?

Print the story for each child and have the students take turns narrating a few paragraphs of the story.

Discuss ways to improve the narration of each student, as well as complimenting the positive aspects of each narration.

Amati's Dream

Kim Maerkl

On a snowy night in December, Raphael carefully lifted his violin from its case. It was almost one hundred years old and his most prized possession. His father had given it to him for Christmas, it was the violin he had played as a child. Raphael began to practice, and his little spaniel crept quietly into the room, curled himself up between the boy's feet and slept.

Raphael's dark eyes sparkled as his delicate fingers searched up and down the strings for the notes. Playing music is like telling a story, he often thought. Raphael closed his eyes and let his violin carry him to a far away place.

After he finished practicing he glanced at the clock, it was only eight. "There's still enough time for a trip to the attic," he said excitedly. Raphael was never afraid in the attic, quite the opposite, he felt very happy among the cobwebs and disorder. Putting on a thick wooly sweater, he headed down the hall to the creaky attic door. Slowly he opened it and climbed the old and dusty steps. His little dog didn't like the narrow attic steps and stayed behind.

At the top of the stairs, a single light bulb dangled from a black wire. Raphael pulled its string, and the light sputtered to life giving off a dusty glow. There they were, all the old secret forgotten things just waiting for him; boxes filled with beautiful kimonos that had belonged to his great-grandmother in Japan, stacks of piano and violin music yellowed with age, and trunks filled with photographs. But, his favorite and most secret box, was a box filled with notebooks and old letters. The notebooks belonged to his great-grandfather from Stratford in England and were filled with stories. Raphael loved touching the yellowed pages and writing penned with a golden nib, which reminded him of his own bird feather pen. Why did great-grandfather write these stories, he sometimes asked himself. Were they real or simply made up? Probably a bit of both, his mother once told him. The boy liked to think about these things, but the answers remained hidden within the magic of the attic and the mystery of the past.

When Raphael turned one of the pages in great-grandfather's notebook, he gave a little gasp of surprise. The title of the story was, Raphael's Violin. He knew it could not be about him because great-grandfather had died long before he was born but then what and who could it be about? This is how the story began...

It was the year 1666 in Cremona, Italy. On a small cobblestone street named Via San Faustino, was a violin shop. The shop was owned and run by the violin maker Nicolò Amati, he was a kind

man and a maker of wonderful instruments. But, he had a secret in his heart, as we all do, he dreamed of making the most beautiful sounding violin in the world.

Every day when he entered his shop and smelled the varnish and wood he thought, today will be the day that I begin working on this special instrument.

Nicolò did not work alone, he had a young apprentice named Raphael. The boy was only twelve, but showed great promise as a violin maker. Nicolò was delighted to have such a gifted pupil working in his shop and it was a pleasure for him to show his apprentice how to use the special violin making tools. There was a knife for carving the sound holes into the top of the instrument. These holes were shaped like the letter f, and it took quite some practice to make them well. There were chisels for sculpting the shiny brown snail perched proudly upon the neck, called the scroll. Nicolò shared his violin making secrets with Raphael, and taught him how to find the best maple and pine trees in the forest. Nicolò would tap their trunks with a small hammer and listen; the wood spoke to him, and he could hear the sound of the violins locked inside.

Raphael was fond of his work, but he also had a secret in his heart. He did not want to make violins he wanted to play one. For as long as he could remember, he wished to be a violinist.

Unfortunately, his parents did not have the money for an instrument and the lessons, so the closest he could come to what he loved most was to work in the violin shop.

Each day great violinists, cellists, and violists from all corners of Italy came to Nicolò's shop. They admired the instruments which hung around the room like ornaments on a Christmas tree. Nicolò would so very gently remove one from its hook and hand it to the customer. The patron would turn the instrument carefully in his hands and examine it from all angles. Often, he would walk over to the window to inspect it in the sunlight. Then, he would begin to play.

If the musician was satisfied with the sound and the workmanship he would buy the instrument. Of course, this delighted Nicolò but he often said his creations were like his children and it was difficult to send them off into the world.

Young Raphael sat at his workbench, unnoticed by the customers streaming in and out of the shop. Yet, he paid great attention to them, especially the violinists. He watched how they held the bow, how their fingers curved around the fingerboard hopping up and down like a fluttering butterfly. Fascinated, he listened to the music they made and remembered the melodies they played.

At the end of the day Nicolò was usually the first to go home. Raphael stayed behind to clean up the shop. One night after he had finished sweeping up the sawdust, he dragged a chair across the room, climbed on it and stood in front of a magnificent violin. He had never dared to touch any of

the instruments once they were hanging in their place. His heart was pounding fast as he reached up, and like a ripe apple plucked the violin from its hook.

He walked across the room, took one of the smaller bows from the table and began to stroke it across the strings. Raphael's fingers searched for the notes he heard in his head, and he began to play, just a simple melody adorned by his beautiful sound. It was one of the happiest moments of his life, he closed his eyes and wished it would never end.

When he finished playing he carefully returned the instrument to its place and closed up the shop.

That night he had wild and wonderful dreams. He saw himself entering Nicolò's shop and trying any instrument he desired. He saw himself walking the streets carrying a shiny black violin case and wearing a concert suit. He noticed people watching him, admiring him; Raphael the violinist! He dreamed of playing a concert for the bishop dressed in his red robes and for the king in his great palace. He dreamed and dreamed.

When he awoke he was eager to play the violin again. Now, every night would be enchanted with music making. As the days passed Raphael became more and more daring, like choosing pralines from a box of chocolates he tried one violin and then another. He came to know each of the instruments, and they became his friends. The violin he liked best had vivid red stripes across the back. Affectionately, he named it his tiger violin. It had the sweetest sound of all and he grew very attached to it. Often, when he played this violin he forgot the time and would practice long into the night. The moon was his only audience.

Nicolò suspected that his instruments were being touched, but he wanted to see for himself what was happening before confronting his young apprentice. One evening he said good bye to Raphael and left the shop, but he did not go home. He hid in the shadows outside the window and peeked inside. Nicolò watched the boy and listened to his music. He was stunned by its beauty.

Tomorrow, I will begin building an instrument for my apprentice, he thought. Raphael must have his own violin.

The next morning a well-dressed man and boy came into Nicolò's shop. Raphael observed them out of the corner of his eye, he had never seen a child dressed in such finery. The father introduced himself and his son to Nicolò. Then, he said, "Signor Amati, I would like to buy a violin for Antonio. Please bring us your best, the price is not important." Nicolò carefully chose an instrument and handed it to the boy. Antonio promptly placed it under his chin and began to play.

His fingers flew across the fingerboard, and a great waterfall of notes rushed over the violin. Suddenly he stopped. "It is a very fine instrument Signor, but it is too big for me, do you have a smaller model?" Then the unthinkable happened; Nicolò reached up, removed Raphael's tiger violin

from its hook and handed it to Antonio. Again, the boy played a multitude of notes. When he was finished he said, “Yes, Papa, I like this one very much. This is the violin I would like to have.” The sale was completed, and Antonio and his father left the shop.

Raphael’s heart was broken. His tiger violin was gone, and he knew he would never be a virtuoso like Antonio. Without an instrument, without lessons, he would never become a violinist. His dream had vanished.

One afternoon when Nicolò and Raphael were sitting side by side at the workbench Nicolò turned to his apprentice and said, “A beautiful sound is the soul of great music. Never forget this when you are making your instruments.” Raphael smiled and replied, “Yes, I will remember,” but his eyes were filled with sorrow.

Nicolò could not bear to see his apprentice so unhappy, and he worked long hours making a special violin for the boy. When it was time to apply the varnish, Nicolò gently painted the liquid onto the surface of the wood and watched with delight as fiery red stripes sprung from the back of the violin.

On Christmas Eve in the year 1666 Nicolò called Raphael over to his workbench.

“Raphael,” he said, “you have deceived me, I know that you have been playing the violins in my shop after I go home at night.”

Raphael hung his head in shame and fear. The master continued, “I would like to hear you play again, you don’t have to hide from me anymore.” Confused, the boy looked up at his teacher.

Nicolò picked up a violin case, placed it on the table and said to him, “Open it, it’s yours, I’ve made it especially for you.”

Raphael could not believe what he was hearing, he could not believe that this was not a dream. He touched the case, it was real. His heart beat furiously as he opened the latches and removed the violin from its silken bed. When he lifted the instrument to his shoulder and began to play, old Nicolò turned to look out the window. Tears ran down his cheeks as he realized that his dream had come true, he had built the most beautiful sounding violin in the world.

Raphael’s mother called up to the attic, “Time for bed, you have school tomorrow.” Raphael closed great-grandfather’s notebook. It was very late as he came down the attic steps, but he could not resist the temptation of his violin. He stood in a beam of moonlight streaming through the window and began to play for Nicolò and that other Raphael who lived in Italy so long ago.

©2015

Antonio Stradivari was Amati’s most famous pupil.

The enclosed posters can be printed and hung up in the classroom.

Antonio Stradivari

Cremona
Made in 1692



Antonio Stradivari

Cremona
Made in 1692

