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Giuseppe Cazzaniga, Liutaio

Bernareggio, July 2009 - June 2012

Restoration of a Brescian style double bass

The instrument is property of Maestro Ezio Pederzani

Back

The back is made from cherry wood, in two pieces, cracks are present over the entire surface, the button is missing.



The thickness decrease from 4,5 - 5,2 millimetres in the lower bouts to 3,7 - 4,3 millimetres in the upper part.

The joint was reinforced, I believe at the time of construction, with butterfly maple inserts.



The corners on the bass side were remade, and there are large sections at the maximum upper and lower width which have been replaced.









A remade section is also present at the treble C bout.



The lower edge, adjacent to and under the block has been remade, maybe to repair the damage caused by playing the instrument without an endpin.

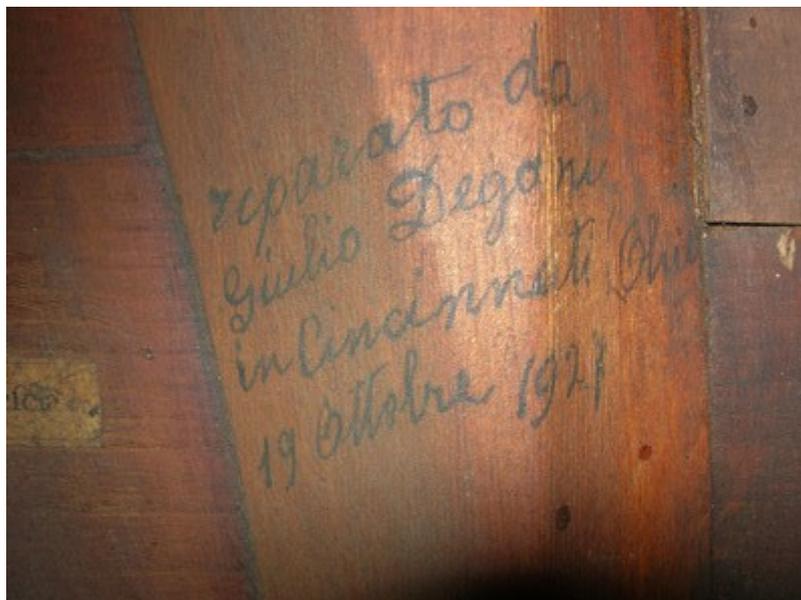




In the upper section, near the upper block, the presence of wider purfling may show that the profile has been reduced in width



There is a label reading "...o. Paolo Maggini in Brescia ", as well as a pencil writing reading " riparato da Giulio Degani in Cincinnati Ohio 19 ottobre 1927 " .



The soundpost crossbar, of strange form, as well as the upper and lower bars, are made of the same wood and seem to have been replaced by the same person, whose work resembles the shaping of the linings and of the reinforcements at the upper and lower blocks, which I found while repairing the ribs.





The small bar is from a different maker and seem to have been replaced more recently.



In the lower part there are several rectangular reinforcements, placed along repaired cracks. those above the lower bar are in walnut, and those below in spruce.



The bend, placed fairly high, has been broken, and there is some filler from the outside. Inside it has been reinforced with a strip of walnut, with grain parallel to that of the back.







There are additional reinforcements, maybe in ash, along two cracks on the bass side, as well as two others smaller in size on the treble side.



The reinforcement along the bend has also cracked.

I remove the reinforcements along the cracks in the lower section, and clean the area.



It is now possible to see the profile of the ribs, traced with a scribe roughly 4 millimetres from the border.



Some of the cracks have been filled with strips of walnut, and one was filled with white putty.



There are marks from a scraper or a small plane present on the entire surface.  
Under the reinforcements there are scribe marks.



I clean the middle section.



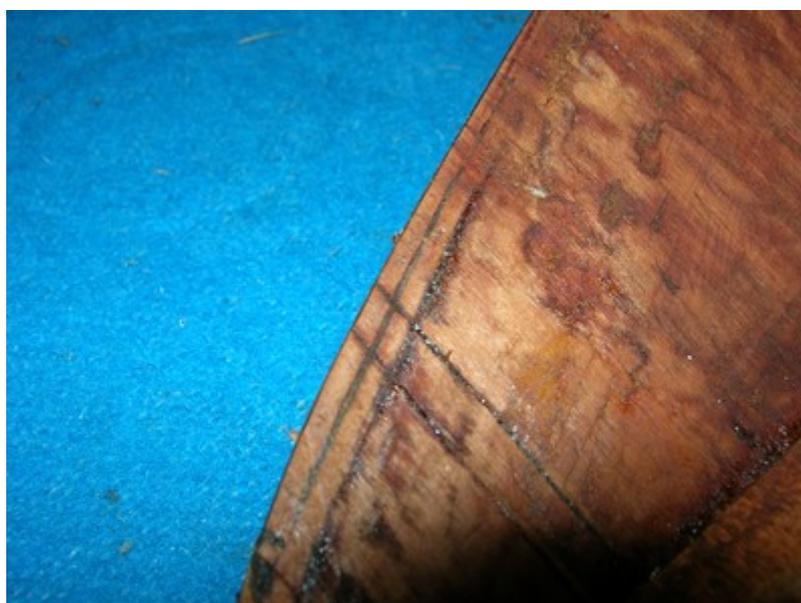
The area around the label has been varnished, maybe to protect the label.



The profile of the ribs is present here as well.



I clean the upper part.



Given that the upper part of the back has been modified, it is probable that the profile of the ribs was rescribed during a previous repair.

I apply temporary cleats along all cracks.



I choose to remove the bars with a plane and gouge, and then cleaning the glueing surfaces with hot water; this way avoid the possibility of causing further damage to the back while unsticking the bars.

None of the bars is original, their excessive weight and rigidity could have caused some of the damage the back has suffered, the removal is necessary to repair the cracks under the bars.

Unfortunately during the process I will have to remove the writing of Giulio Degani on the soundpost bar.

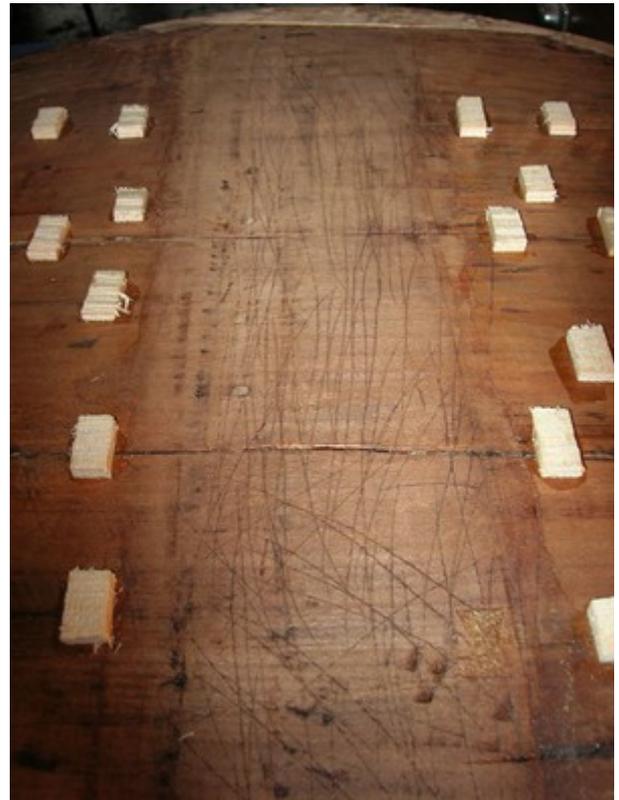
The spruce with which the lower bar was made is fairly hard and rigid.



The glueing surface of the back to the lower bar was scratched with a scribe. Similar to the surface under the walnut and spruce reinforcements along the cracks.

One of the butterfly inserts was covered by the bar.

There are also several round pins, maybe placed from the outside during a bad repair to a previous smaller bar, whose position is still visible on the surface of the back



The previous bar would have had a width of 20 - 22 millimetres, and was placed along the upper edge of the bar I removed, corresponding with the widest point of the back.



The soundpost bar was made with the same wood of the lower one.



The scratch marks on the glueing surface are present here as well, and under the bar there is another butterfly insert.



The butterfly and the surrounding area are rich with tool marks. Maybe a previous bar was narrower, but similar to the one I removed.

The small central bar was made from a softer spruce, with a wider grain than that used for the other bars. This material seems less oxidized as well.



The glueing surface under the small bar has been scribed as well.



The upper bar was made from the same wood of the soundpost and the lower bars.

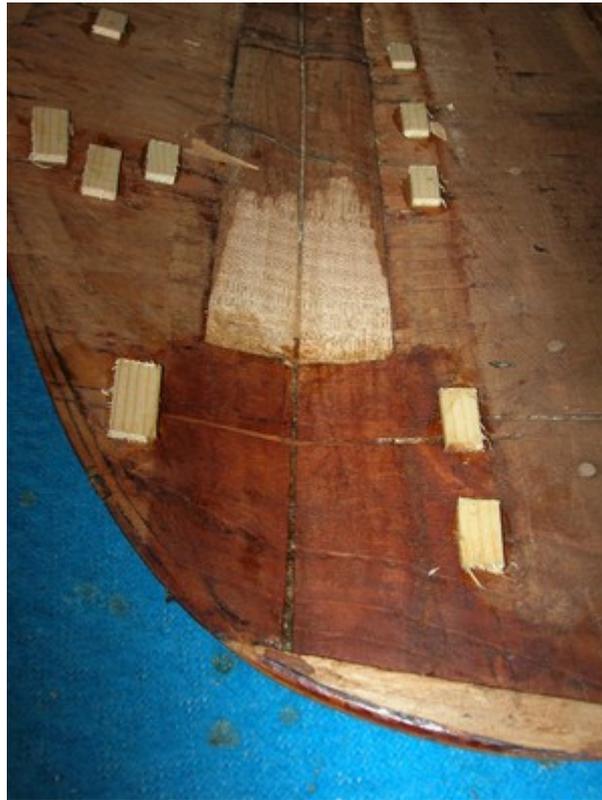


The glueing surface has been scribed here as well, and there are several pins similar to those under the lower bar.

The position of a previous bar is visible, at the widest point of the upper bouts, and 20 -22 millimetres wide.



I remove part of the reinforcement along the bend, on the bass side.



The edge between the widest point of the upper bouts and the bend has been remade with maple which is thicker than the rest of the back.



I bring it to the same thickness



There are double lines of non original purfling inlaid into the remade edge, which are present along the entire profile of the back, placed over or near another wider purfling with very thin black sides, maybe the original.

The older purfling would outline a wider profile in this area of the instrument.



I remove a temporary cleat near the upper corner on the bass side where there is a crack as well as splintered wood, and clean the surface.



I then remove a temporary cleat from a crack closer to the bend, and repair the two cracks and the splintered area.



I make a patch along the border near the bend, using maple with the grain slightly inclined.



I then make a doubling along the edge from the upper corner to the patch near the bend.



I place two cleats on the repaired cracks near the corner and bend.



I remove the temporary cleats and filler from the next two cracks and I repair them using slivers of wood.



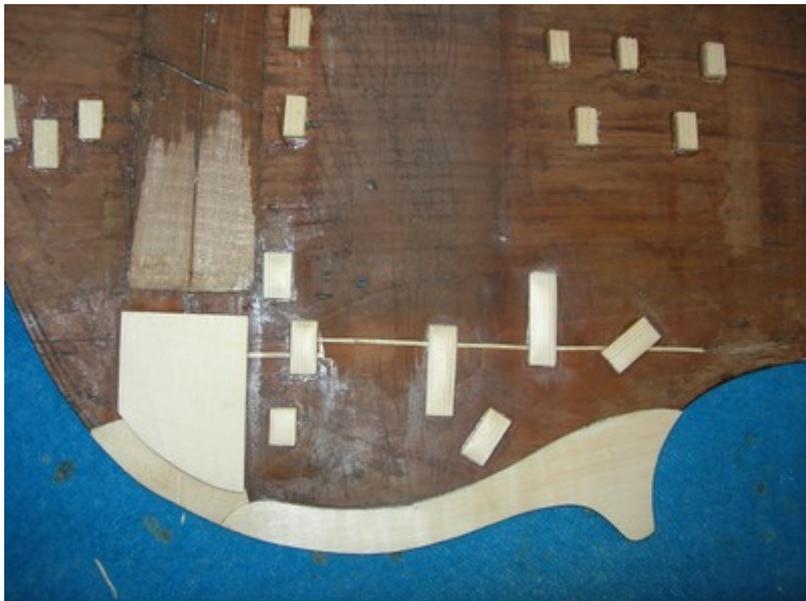
I remake a section of the reinforcement along the bend using spruce, with the grain slightly offset to that of the back.



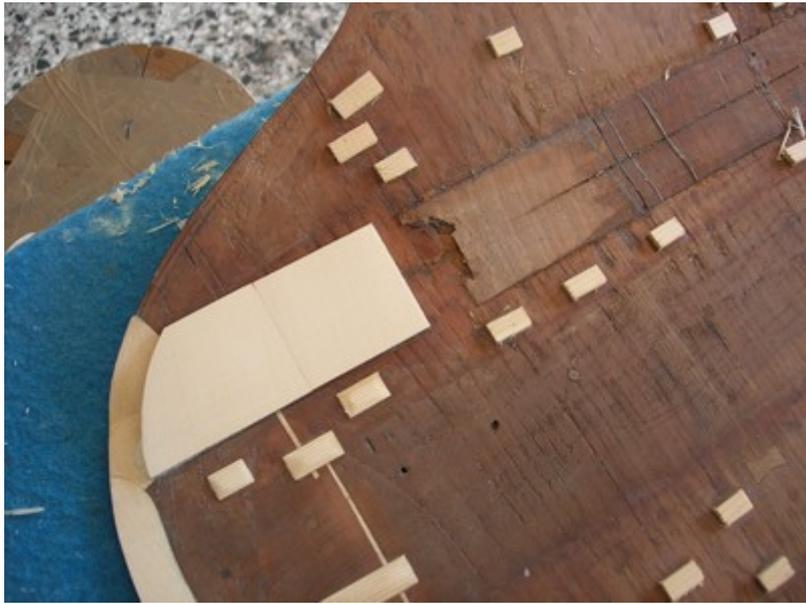
The next crack, near the bend, was caused by one of the walnut pins under the upper bar.



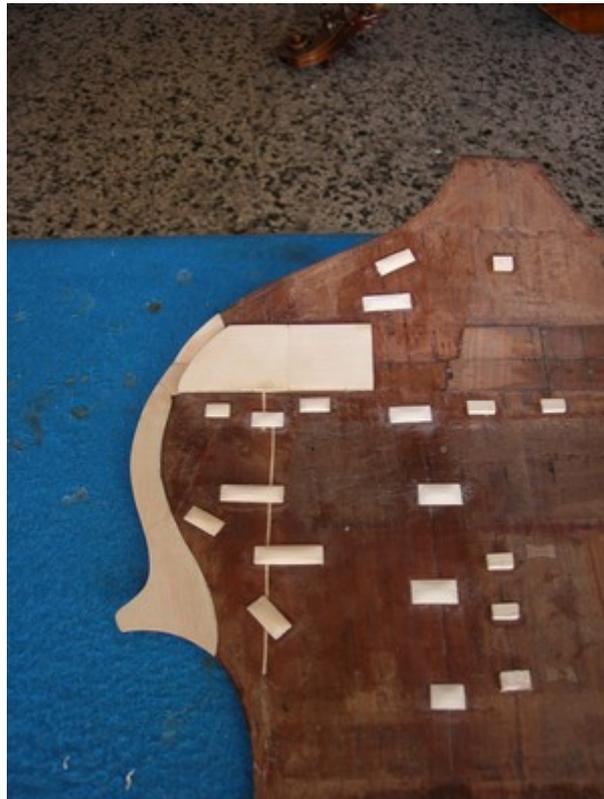
I remove the pin and repair the crack.



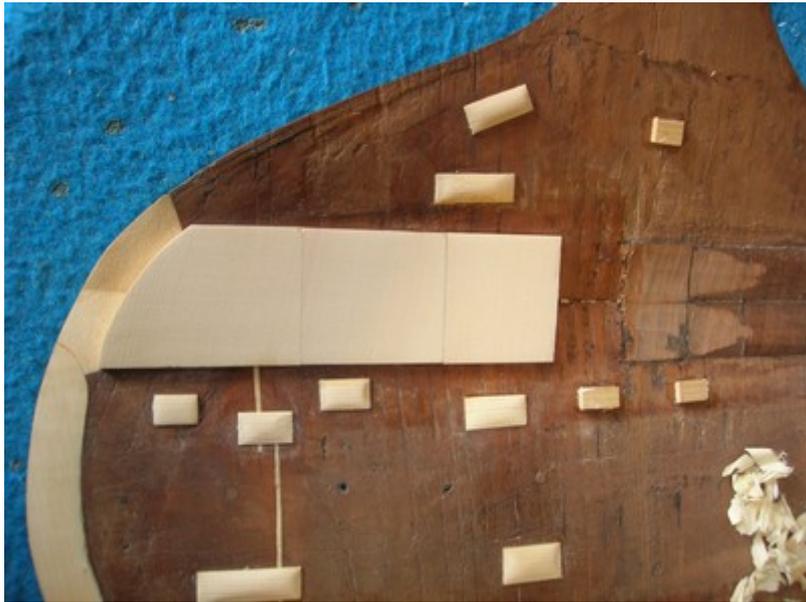
I remove a second section of the reinforcement along the bend and I remake it.



I then remove a third section, and repair the next two cracks, without removing the slivers of walnut already inserted to fill the cracks, which are well done.



I remove another section of the reinforcement along the bend and remake a part of it.



I make an edge doubling near the bend on the bass side out of maple, with the grain slightly inclined.



I remove the temporary cleat from the first crack in the lower part of the bass side, and repair the crack.



I make an edge doubling in maple along the widest portion of the lower curve on the bass side.



The next crack, in the lower section on the bass side, was repaired with several slivers of walnut and with putty. It reopened.

I remove the temporary cleats, open the crack, remove the slivers and repair the crack, rebuilding the missing part in white maple.





