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THE FORMER BUSKER WHO MAKES GUITARS FOR 100 GUINEAS

TUCKED away in his studio workshop in Jubilee Place, just off King's Road, Chelsea, sits a craftsman and musician.

Always striving for perfection, he makes guitars of very high quality. His minimum charge in 100 guineas, but he works long and hard to earn it.

"Sometimes I work here until past midnight and very often I'm here on Saturdays and Sundays: I get so involved I lose all track of time," said Mr. Anthony Casimere Zemaitis.

Although he is grandson of a Lithuanian lute maker, craftsmanship was not passed directly down to him. "Strangely enough my father did not know anything about musical instruments and was not at all good with his hands," he said.

Mr. Zemaitis began to make guitars many years ago. "I wanted to play flamenco music so I searched the shops to buy a twelve string guitar, but no one sold them. So I decided to make my own," he said.

And from that time onwards, making guitars has been the great love of his life. "I am very happy, my work gives me great satisfaction.

"It is difficult to explain to someone—to show someone a guitar and make them understand that each individual piece of work, the more exact, precise you can make it, the better the sound will be," he said.

ALL TYPES

Tapping the cases of three unfinished guitars on his bench he listened to the different tones. "I make all types of guitars for classical, folk, blues, jazz and pop. I love making acoustic guitars but I have made some beautiful electric guitars too," he said.

By tapping he demonstrated the different degrees of hardness, required for different types of guitar—a soft wood for the mellow sounds of folk music; harder for the steel strings to be put on a blues guitar.

He has been commissioned to make guitars for well known professional guitarists

in several fields, including Long John Baldry and Spencer Davies in the pop world, Lisa Turner in the folk field and Davy Graham the blues singer.

In fact, he once played around folk and blues clubs in London with Davy Graham and they went busking together in St. Tropez, South of France.

LUCRATIVE

"That was quite a lucrative episode," he said. "We played folk/blues outside the street cafes all summer and returned to London in the winter."

But so far as guitar playing is concerned he now just plays for friends. "I'm much happier working from my bench. I like to have roots—a base! Six months in a place is not long enough to establish a base."

He has lost track of the number of guitars he has made since he began. "But I never rush my work. And when I take orders, I warn my customers that if I am to make it, I am going to do it properly. The longest part is the drying-out of the materials, which you can't speed up."

ALL COLOURS

Holding strips of coloured wood ranging from dark red, black and blue, to pale creams, he explained: "To make the rosette around the sound hole, I make up the pattern and use 8,000 tiny pieces of coloured woods which I put together by hand."

He uses dyed sycamores, purple-heart, ebony, box,

cherry and rosewood to get the colours he wants.

He likes decorating his guitars. "Some need pieces of ivory put on them, and on all the guitars I sell I put my own special trademark, a hand-engraved silver shield."

He works entirely alone. "When I'm commissioned by a customer, I feel it would be wrong for me then to farm out work to someone else. It would also mean I would have to put the price of the guitar up and spend time teaching an apprentice, which I don't want to do. Anyway—I am happy working on my own," he said.

STOLE ON VISIT TO ENGLAND

Said to have come to this country to see her niece, ill in hospital, a 50-year-old Persian housewife was fined £40, with costs of nine guineas, at Marlborough Street, for shoplifting in the West End.

Mrs. Akhtan Ghoreshi, staying at the Portland Hotel, Queen's Gate, pleaded guilty to stealing a pullover, four pairs of tights, two child's dresses and a nightdress, worth £10 13s., from Marks and Spencers store at Marble Arch.

WPC Barbara Ludford-Brooks told magistrate Mr. John Aubrey-Fletcher that the defendant was a woman of good previous character. She intended going home the following week, having arrived in this country with some £350 in her possession.

Mrs. Ghoreshi told the court she was sorry for what she had done.

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WINE AND FOOD

by GEORGE MORTIMER