



“The word “Master” can be much overused today, but in Germany it is very complex and difficult to actually become a true Master. The schooling and tests required to pass are extremely tough and the process takes years of study, practice, hard work and skill.”

Höfner is still a family-owned business and most of its production headquarters are still in Germany. It is rare today to find a company – in any business – that has had employees for 40 plus years; Höfner still has several employees with a history of 40 plus years and counting. Some of these “Masters” hold a significant part in creating and designing key Höfner instruments.

Another big part of the company’s production and history is violin-making. The company actually started as a small violin workshop in 1887. In the early 1900s, Karl Höfner was commissioned to repair the King of Saxony’s own personal violin. The job was successful and Höfner had the King’s honor – as a result, Höfner quickly gained a reputation for quality instruments. Today, Höfner is the largest stringed-instrument company in Germany – we manufacture violins, violas, cello, double basses and bows. We have many talented “Masters” who have special skills and techniques with finishing and woodworking. We use some of our violin-making secrets and techniques in our guitar and bass production.

As you touched on, you were very involved with certain points in musical history; the post-war jazz scene and the “British Invasion.”

That’s got to be a great feeling, and I’m interested to know how you see that affecting your company, either positively or negatively.

It was a great thing! Höfner instruments were all over and many of these artists were playing Höfner. Everyday we still have questions and calls coming in, asking about some of these models and having conversations about the players and sounds they made.

Paul McCartney and the 500/1 (Beatle Bass) became so iconic that many of the other Höfner instruments were overlooked or even forgotten about. In the last ten years or so, many of these other models have gone through a process of being rediscovered. Höfner sold over one-million guitars between 1948 and 1994, so there are many models and a ton of history.

Looking back through your vintage instruments, Höfner obviously built a reputation with your archtops. When did that begin, and where did it take you?

Yes, both hollow and semi-hollow instruments played a key role in building Höfner’s guitar reputation – as a matter of fact, these guitars are still in demand and a very important part of Höfner’s business today. We started producing archtop guitars in the late 40s; by the early 50s, the guitars really took off and production was ramped up. Models such as the President, Senator, Committee and the Golden Höfner guitars were some of our most popular and now collectable models.

We have the pleasure and honor of many great jazz guitar legends – past and present – making Höfner jazz guitars their personal guitars of choice. We still produce

