

E.M.M.C. HEADS EAST FOR HIGH-VALUE STRINGED INSTRUMENTS

New Factories In Romania Offer European Quality At Prices Associated With Asian Mass Production

Throughout its history, Entertainment Music Marketing Corporation (E.M.M.C.) has built its stringed instrument business on the basis of offering quality handmade European violins at extremely competitive price points. Although this may sound like a simple mission, E.M.M.C., like many stringed instrument suppliers, has often found it a challenge to obtain a steady supply of consistently high-quality European products—especially ones that can compete in price with today's mass-produced Asian imports.

Responding to this challenge, E.M.M.C. embarked on a joint venture with a European partner to start manufacturing its own instruments in Romania during 1998-99. The Deer Park, NY-based importer/distributor acquired an interest in two Romanian stringed instrument-making factories, which it has merged and now operates under the name S.C. Vivarius Impex S.R.L.

Today, just over a year after acquiring the second and largest of the Romanian factories, the investment is paying off handsomely. E.M.M.C. President Mark Saltzman reports that the factory has undergone substantial upgrades to improve its production efficiency. It is now manufacturing violins, violas, cellos, and basses in both student and step-up models and has introduced several major new products under the Leon Aubert and Mathias Thoma names. What's more, E.M.M.C. will be unveiling additional Romanian-produced items at Winter 2001 NAMM.

"We're very happy with what we've accomplished with the factory in just over a year," says Saltzman. "We went into this venture so that we could main-

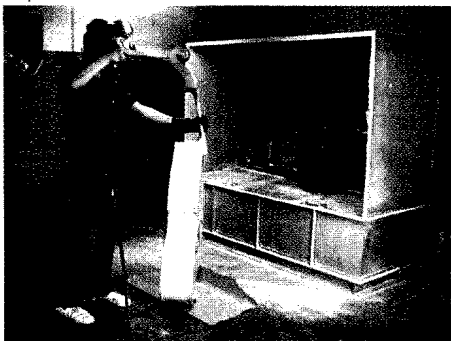
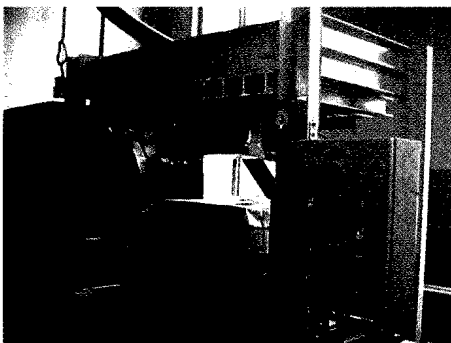
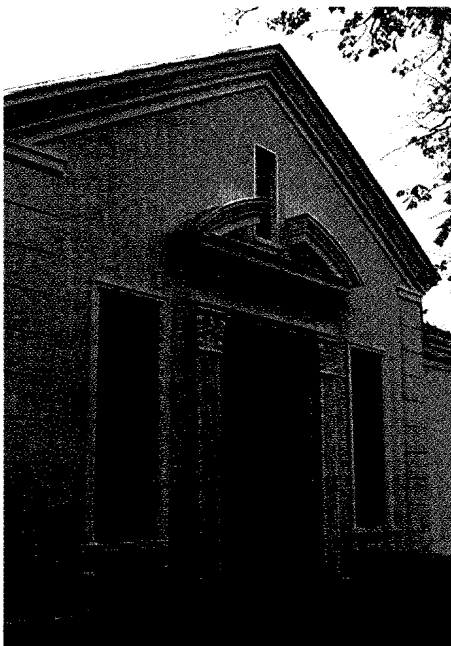
tain control over the quality of our products and production costs. We felt that by doing our own manufacturing, and not being forced to rely on outside suppliers, we would be able to offer dealers consistently high-quality European stringed instruments at an unbeatable price. So far, everything has proceeded according to plan."

According to Saltzman, an important part of E.M.M.C.'s plan was to bring Western-style production efficiencies to the factory, while maintaining the Old World craftsmanship techniques of its highly skilled workforce. The factory, which employs 250, is located in the city of Reghin, an area with a stringed instrument-making tradition that dates back hundreds of years.

"Because the factory is located in one of Europe's leading violin-making centers, there are many talented craftspeople in the area whose families have been making stringed instruments for generations and who are very skilled in this fine art," says Saltzman. This is one of the factory's main advantages."

Another advantage that the factory offered was an abundant supply of top-quality raw materials. Along with the facility itself, E.M.M.C. purchased its large inventory of aged European spruce and maple woods, which are valued for their tonal properties. Having these superior woods to work with is another factor that will ensure the instruments' quality consistency, Saltzman points out.

To get the most from S.C. Vivarius Impex's excellent staff and raw materials, E.M.M.C. has upgraded the factory's tooling and production processes. The facility has been overhauled with new, more modern equipment—from



SCENES FROM ROMANIA. The Vivarius and Impex stringed instrument factories combine modern machinery and skilled craftsmanship to deliver high value.