

DAVID TECCHLER

WRITTEN BY JULIAN HERSH

The most renowned maker of the Roman school, David Tecchler was probably from a Bavarian town near Füssen and by the late 1690s was working in Rome, where he established a successful business that lasted for more than 30 years. Not much is known of his early life or training, nor do we know when he moved to Italy. However, on 9 December 1696 he was welcomed by the German fraternity known as the Veneranda Arciconfraternita del Campo Santo Teutonico, so he was in Rome by then.

During his long working life, Tecchler produced a number of violins and cellos that show the influence of both Stainer and Amati. He also made violas, although those are quite rare. One such example built in c.1730 has a label inscribed with *La mia terza viola* ('My third viola'). There are some other instruments, including an archlute, but Tecchler is especially known for his magnificent cellos.

INSTRUMENT

Bearing an original manuscript label dated 1701, this cello is striking both for the purity of its condition and its beautiful orange-brown varnish, as well as the first-rate materials and workmanship.

Originally of grand proportions it has been slightly reduced in size but this has not diminished its powerful appearance.

Tecchler's continued production of large-size cellos is probably the result of commissions directly from the papacy, or at least for use in a church-type service where the cello functioned primarily as a bass instrument. This might also explain the plugged processional hole above the centre of the back on this cello and many other Tecchler cellos. Another factor related to the size of Tecchler cellos was the tuning of the A string in the Baroque era. This varied throughout Europe, with Rome being on the low side. A low tuning required a correspondingly longer string length to achieve the appropriate amount of string tension, making a smaller cello less feasible.

MATERIALS

Framed by a softly beaded edge, the slab-cut back is of Italian *oppio* with a varied pattern of narrow flame, while the

top is of spruce with a wide, prominent grain. A common feature of the spruce used by Tecchler is the light-coloured figurations running across the grain, which are known as *Hazelfichte*.

FORM AND CONSTRUCTION

With their strong upright stance and slightly low, splayed-out placement, the f-holes reinforce the powerful appearance of the cello while the rounded shape of the nicks betrays a Germanic influence. Tecchler commonly utilised locating pins on the top and bottom of the back. On this cello the top pin was cut out when the size was reduced, although both pins are generally visible on his violins and are a point of differentiation from Jacob Stainer (who didn't use them).

ARCHING

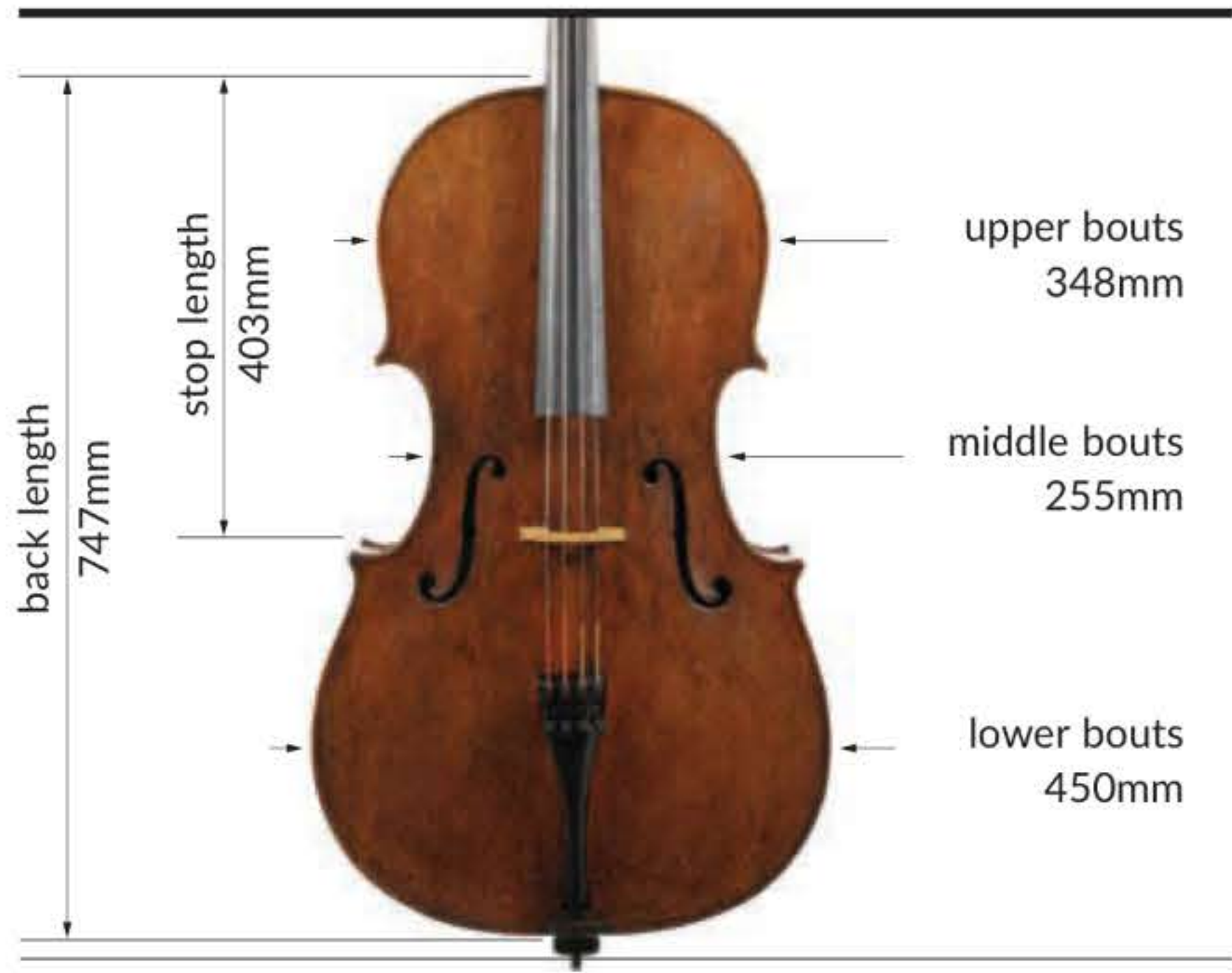
The full, rounded arch creates a good amount of air space contributing to the cello's wonderful bass resonance.

SCROLL

The scroll, with its deeply carved volute and large flat eye, is characteristic of Tecchler. In some examples, such as this cello, the chamfer has an extended last turn where it finishes at the eye. ▶

MAKER
DAVID TECCHLER
NATIONALITY
GERMAN
BORN
1666
DIED
1747
INSTRUMENT
CELLO
DATE
1701





All measurements taken with tape



