

# Press

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Musikmesse  
International Trade Fair for Musical Instruments, Sheet Music,  
Music Production and Music Business Connections  
Frankfurt am Main, 11 to 14 April 2018

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## **The courage to innovate: German Musical Instrument Award to be presented at Musikmesse 2018 goes to Steffen Friedel and Gebrüder Mönning**

Although digitalisation may be one of the top subjects in the music industry, the musician is still the benchmark when it comes to innovation and playing pleasure. This is shown by the coveted German Musical Instrument Award for 2018, which goes to **Wappenbratsche** (Escutcheon Viola) by Steffen Friedel Streichinstrumentenbau and to the **Oboe Model 155 AM** by Gebrüder Mönning Holzblasinstrumente GmbH. In both cases, the decision of the testing musicians was decisive. Among the points they emphasised are the sound qualities, the special design and the playability of the hand-made instruments.

The German Musical Instrument Award will be presented for the 28<sup>th</sup> time on the occasion of the Frankfurt Musikmesse (11 to 14 April 2018). In this highly international setting, the competition draws attention to outstanding products made in Germany. This year, special attention is due not only to the instruments but also their makers who, with courage and innovativeness, have generated positive signals for the sector. The awards ceremony will be held for invited guests in the 'Rotunde' of the Festhalle on 13 April 2018.

## **Bold design: 'Wappenbratsche', Streichinstrumentenbau Steffen Friedel, Dresden**

The extravagant design of the Wappenbratsche viola by Steffen Friedel immediately catches the eye. The design is inspired by the form of the F-holes of a Campanula by H. Bleffert and the peg box of the 1720 'Gillott' Dancing Masters violin by A. Stradivari. However, it was not only the design but also the other qualities of the instrument that made it stand out: the testing musicians were delighted with its playability and response in all circumstances and they gave top marks for, inter alia, its open sound, volume and variability. Overall, the jurors described the 'Wappenbratsche' viola as innovative and pleasing. Second-best rating in the objective test and fourth place in the production-quality assessment rounded off the very positive opinions.

Messe Frankfurt Exhibition GmbH  
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No less extraordinary than the instrument is the career of award-winner Steffen Friedel who, before turning to music, worked as a mechanic in the metal industry and as a geology technician for hydrogeology. In 2009, he followed his calling and began to train as a violin maker. In 2010, he became self-employed. In 2016, he graduated with a bachelor's degree in string-instrument making and, at the beginning of 2018, passed the master craftsman's examination in violin making. Steffen Friedel makes violins, violas and cellos in the traditional Italian style. His professional development and his courage in making this extraordinary instrument are evidence of his enthusiasm and willingness to strike out in new directions.

The 'Wappenbratsche' viola (body length: 415 mm) is made of high-grade Tyrolean spruce for the top and Bosnian maple for the back. The ribs and the neck are made in accordance with tradition. The instrument is finished in linseed-oil varnish based on dammar and copal.

### **Oboe Model 155 AM, Gebrüder Mönning Holzblasinstrumente GmbH, Markneukirchen**

Human judgement was also decisive in the oboe category with almost all testing musicians singling out the Model 155 AM by Gebrüder Mönning as their favourite. In particular, they emphasised the timbre of the low register, the volume across the entire spectrum and the response as being very good. They were also delighted with playability under all circumstances. The Model 155 AM received the best marks of the competition in the tuning judging block. The very good second place in the craftsmanship assessment and third place in the objective test underscored the positive overall impression made by the instrument.

The Model 155 AM oboe symbolises the illustrious resurrection of a brand: the roots of the company stretch back into the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Until the 1950s, Gebrüder Mönning was considered to be the world's leading oboe manufacturer with its bassoons and clarinets also firmly established in the world's biggest orchestras. The period after 1945 and the subsequent nationalisation resulted in a phase of stagnation that went hand-in-hand with a considerable image decline. Only after 1990 did the company begin to regain lost ground. The breakthrough came ten years later with strategic decisions, such as the modernisation of the production characteristics and improved quality control. Today, the hand-made instruments by Gebrüder Mönning are once again to be found in the world's leading orchestras and enjoying a first-class reputation.

The Model 155 AM oboe is made of untreated, polished Grenadilla wood with gold-plated mechanical parts and is fitted almost completely with silicone-coated cork pads. The adjustment screws are all made of 'Nirosta' stainless steel and, in certain cases, have Teflon inserts.

### **German Musical Instrument Award 2019: the deadline for entries is 20 April 2018**

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In 2019, the German Musical Instrument Award of the Federal Ministry of Economics and Energy (*Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie – BMWi*) will be given in the categories

**# Steel-string guitar (flattop, 6 strings)**

**# B♭ trumpet (piston valves)**

from the plucked instrument and brass instrument product groups.

The competition is open to all musical-instrument manufacturers in the Federal Republic of Germany whose instruments are available via the retail trade or direct sales (except unique models). The aim of the award is to draw international attention to German companies and to increase their chances in the market. The winners not only receive medals and certificates but are also invited to promote their products with the award label. Additionally, all award-winning instruments are to be seen in a special exhibition at Musikmesse in Frankfurt am Main.

The closing date for written entries is 20 April 2018. The instruments will be called for in August 2018. Further information at [www.bmwi.de](http://www.bmwi.de).

Further information about Musikmesse at [www.musikmesse.com](http://www.musikmesse.com).

**Background information on Messe Frankfurt**

Messe Frankfurt is the world's largest trade fair, congress and event organiser with its own exhibition grounds. With over 2,500 employees at some 30 locations, the company generates annual sales of around €661\* million. Thanks to its far-reaching ties with the relevant sectors and to its international sales network, the Group looks after the business interests of its customers effectively. A comprehensive range of services – both onsite and online – ensures that customers worldwide enjoy consistently high quality and flexibility when planning, organising and running their events. The wide range of services includes renting exhibition grounds, trade fair construction and marketing, personnel and food services.

With its headquarters in Frankfurt am Main, the company is owned by the City of Frankfurt (60 percent) and the State of Hesse (40 percent). \* preliminary figures for 2017

For more information, please visit our website at:

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