

GITARREN-ATELIER

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EXPERT REPORT of the guitar

Spanish model
Markneukirchen around 1860
attributed to Johann August Paulus

Signature: "M. Schuster junior, Neukirchen" (engraved mother-of-pearl plate on the fingerboard)





The instrument comes with:

- Original, very elaborate case in the style of old violin cases made of Brazilian rosewood veneer with Biedermeier fittings (locks non functional) with domed lid and top handle. Purfling (rope pattern) and decorative inlays on the top, multi-colored rope pattern parallel to the binding, single row checkerboard pattern parallel to the edge on the top side, triangle pattern light-dark parallel to the binding on the bottom side, spruce back.
- Original key for the neck screw.
- Letter of provenance from Marthel Thelang, née Wicke, Dresden (1987).
- General guide for each family, number 43 volume 1928.

Dendrochronological examination:

Ekkard & Petra Seidl, Markneukirchen - Seidl No. 424
(annual rings diverge, therefore 2 curves)

(97) 1750-1846

Bass side (121) 1717-1837

Treble side (119) 1716-1834

(103) 1744-1846

Spruce from a low mountain range, probably Bavarian Forest.

Special features:

Body from Marcasser ebony veneered with spruce. The neck block is made of hardwood (mahogany), bolted neck with ivory veneer, binding on the neck and headstock (shape according to C.F. Martin). The soundboard has a varnish ground of hide glue or egg white, tuners of the highest quality with base plates set into the sides of the head, frets of mother-of-pearl, decorative inlay of mother-of-pearl describes a half-circle at the bottom of the soundboard, floral inlay of mother-of-pearl on the fingerboard. Body, fingerboard and head with ivory binding.

Very unusual is the engraved mother-of-pearl plate on the fingerboard; "M. Schuster junior Neukirchen". However, the plate does not identify the manufacturer of the guitar, but advertises a leading Markneukirchen trading company at the time. Presumably, the instrument was made on behalf of this dealer.

Condition before restoration:

Decorative cap of the heel was missing, otherwise all original parts were present. Playing marks on the soundboard. (see attached photos)

Severe damage due to improper storage and drying out:

- Soundboard with multiple fine cracks
- Soundboard was detached between end block and lower bout on the bass side, gaping, back under extreme tension, partly detached from the lining
- Back shrinkage cracks in the veneer along the wood grain have caused damage to the decorative inlays
- Ribs and binding loosened at the middle bout and pulled outwards
- Mother-of-pearl segments on the bridge partly loose and incorrectly reattached
- Fingerboard slightly warped towards the lower end

Restoration 2015/2016 Master luthier Florence Ford, Berlin

Technical advice for guitar making Dennis Tolz, Berlin

The restoration repaired all of the damage listed above and restored the instrument to full playing condition.

Ornamental heel plate new: design and execution Friederike Preuß, Markneukirchen 2017.

Model and background:

Commercial interests of Vogtland wholesalers were based on the demands of the national and international markets. Accordingly they had local craftsmen building those instrument models which were highly sought after. Shortly after Christian Friedrich Martin (together with the guitarist, guitar teacher and dealer John Coupa) began to produce and distribute a Spanish model in the United States around 1840 – modeled on the guitars from Cadiz of the early 19th century – similar models were also produced in Markneukirchen in order to take advantage of the boom that the Spanish guitar was experiencing in America at that time. Around 1850/60 Markneukirchen produced a lot of high-quality guitars, which were primarily intended for export to North America.¹ Such "Spanish-American" models, mostly based on C.F. Martin, were among the much-produced guitar models in Markneukirchen until the end of the 19th century.

The instrument which is examined here corresponds to the Spanish model, but in its construction and design it is absolutely typical of the Markneukirchen guitar making style.

Amongst the characteristic features are: The use of veneered precious woods for back and sides, the German head joint, a screwed-in neck, the pin bridge in its special form covered with mother-of-pearl, and the base plates of the Vogtland (or Bohemian-made) tuners inlaid into the head. The decorative inlays in this special form and combination were unique for the Vogtland at that time. The model shape, the use of veneered woods, the simple cross-bracing of the soundboard and the other constructional and design features cannot be attributed to any other region of Central European guitar making.

The uniqueness of the guitar lies in its virtuosity and the extremely elaborate way in which it is made. The execution not only explores the means of Markneukirchen customary design, but also makes use of techniques and working methods for which there are no other examples from this period.

The Instrument:

The appearance of the guitar decorated with elaborate ornamental inlays is exceedingly magnificent, the sumptuous design and overall craftsmanship attest to the master craftsmanship of its maker. The brightly shining decoration with variously colored and engraved mother-of-pearl figures, with its strong sparkle, is particularly effective in candlelight. It is precisely this illumination – the only conceivable one at the time of its creation – that reveals the creator's intention to built an

¹ Markneukirchen dealer Paul Stark's catalog for the World's Fair "Chicago 1893" shows 21 pages of various guitar models, including 11 pages of Spanish models, one page of "copies of C.F. Martin guitars, most beautiful work" and another of "Martin Concert size".

instrument that not only sounds good, but also has a spectacular visual impact in a suitable setting.

The lavish decorative inlays of engraved mother-of-pearl of various colors are particularly magnificent and elaborate in execution. Normally, such mother-of-pearl figures were usually embedded in a black paste, but here, as was often the case with particularly fine pieces, it was used a white putty, presumably a light-colored sealing wax. On the back, in the semicircular inlay at the lower edge of the top and in the head, a different, unusual putty was used, interspersed with a gold-colored glittering dust (chemical composition unknown).

In addition, the guitar reviewed here is not only one of the very few known Markneukirchen guitars to have a veneered neck, but so far the only known one with an ivory covered neck.

Other notable features include the frets made of mother-of-pearl and the floral inlay, also made of the same material, on the end of the fingerboard. This type of decorative inlay was frequently used from the 1830s onwards on guitars made by Klingenthal guitar makers such as Christian Friedrich Goram, Christian Friedrich Hopf, Christian Friedrich Bauer, Friedrich Hoyer or August Meinel, but was also adopted from time to time by Markneukirchen masters such as Karl August Gläsel or Johann August Paulus for particularly beautifully designed instruments. The shape and size of floral motifs were always composed of individual figures and these were arranged individually, so that there are hardly two identical flowers or bouquets.

The overall style of the guitar with its representative decorations suggests that this was an exclusive custom-made instrument. The rich design and exquisite finish of the guitar and the case suggest that the guitar was intended for an extremely wealthy customer. Only a high class and rich personality could afford such a valuable instrument. The unusual mother-of-pearl label on the fingerboard with the company name "M. Schuster junior Neukirchen"² – an important Markneukirchen publisher at that time – could also be an indication that the guitar was originally made as a trade show model. It was also intended to represent the company as an exquisite exhibition piece in a promotionally effective way.³

In any case, the unusual instrument was commissioned from one of the best guitar makers in Markneukirchen. The plaque testifies that the instrument was also intended to advertise the merits of the trading company advertised here.

The details of the design, especially in this accumulation, are unique in their nobility and go far beyond the routine - even that of an outstanding guitar maker. The materials and decorations used, as well as the overall craftsmanship, not only present the highest standard imaginable in guitar making anywhere, but the master wanted and perhaps was commissioned to create an unparalleled work with this instrument. The individual and artistic decoration emphasizes the uniqueness and exclusivity of the instrument with its exceedingly rich ornamentation in all details.

Attribution to Johann August Paulus:

Vogtland guitars were signed by their makers only in exceptional cases at this time. The instrument in question here also has no signet of its maker, but the company name on the mother-of-pearl plate "M. Schuster junior Neukirchen" undoubtedly speaks for the fact that the guitar was made in

² Company M. Schuster junior: founded in 1803 by Johann Michael Schuster, at times the most important trading company in Markneukirchen.

See also: Weller, Enrico: *Der Blasinstrumentenbau im Vogtland von den Anfängen bis zum Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts*. Geiger-Verlag, Horb am Neckar 2004, p 250.

³ The company M. Schuster jun. was represented at the German Industrial Exhibition in Leipzig in 1850. One of the items listed is a "pretty guitar" - elsewhere it says "guitars". Sources on the German Industrial Exhibition in Leipzig in 1850.

1 Wieck, Friedrich Georg (ed.): *Die deutsche Industrie-Ausstellung in der Central-Halle zu Leipzig*. Leipzig: Weber 1850, p. 13 ff.

2nd Catalog of the Industrial Exhibition in Leipzig 1850, second, revised and greatly increased edition Leipzig 1850, p. 89.

"No. 1023: M. Schuster jun. in Markneukirchen, guitars". Source: Enrico Weller

Markneukirchen. In addition, both the constructional and all the design features - despite their individuality - as well as the fine mechanism with the base plates set into the head, fit the working and decorating methods common in Markneukirchen at that time.

The attribution to Johann August Paulus as the builder is based on the similarities of model, decoration and craftsmanship of the guitar presented here with a signed instrument and some other guitars from private collections. Currently, there are about 20 known guitars of the same model, which, according to their characteristic features as well as their exceptionally high quality and individual finish - although none of the instruments is completely similar to the other - must be attributed to one and the same guitar maker.

The instrument, signed by hand in pencil,⁴ bears the following inscription on the inside of the soundboard: "*J August Paulus // aus Neukirchen*", this identifies the maker of all these guitars as Johann Friedrich August Paulus gen. "Berghansadel" (1806-1870). Despite the uniqueness of the instrument, its craftsmanship also clearly shows the unmistakable signature of this Markneukirchen master.

Johann August Paulus was a cousin of Christian Friedrich Martin (1796-1873), whose mother Eva Regina was a Paulus by birth and the sister of Paulus' father Carl Johann Georg Paulus (1766-1845).⁵ Martin and Paulus came from a family of carpenters and shared the same family and professional background. Both Johann Georg Martin, the father of Christian Friedrich, and "August Paulus" are mentioned in the documents of the "Acta Die Geigenmacherinnung Neukirchen/Sa."⁶ 1831 mentioned by name. This refers to the privilege dispute in which the Markneukirchen violin makers tried to prohibit the local carpenters from making guitars.⁷

Paulus, ten years younger than Christian Friedrich Martin, learned his trade - according to tradition in the family of the guitar maker Richard Jacob - also in the workshop of Johann Georg Stauffer in Vienna. It can be assumed that at the time when August Paulus worked in his workshop, probably in the early 1820s, his older cousin, among others, may have instructed him there.⁸

Then, in the 1860s, Paul was the teacher of Karl August Jakob (1846–1918), the father of the important Markneukirchen guitar maker Richard Jacob "Weißgerber" (1877–1960).⁹

⁴ As of 2011: Private property USA Glenn Ericksen, 908-876-5334 (New Jersey).

Some other instruments of this model, which can also be attributed to J. A. Paulus due to their craftsmanship characteristics, can be found in private collections, including Christof Hanusch, Berlin - three unsigned instruments; Rainer Krause, Ebersberg - guitar with label "Jose Benedid"; Fu Ye, Beijing with label "Jose Benedid".

"There is another in the Edinburgh collection, with the same label, also German made: <http://images.is.ed.ac.uk/luna/servlet/detail/UoEart~2~16017~104296:Guitar--Jose-Benedid---FRONT>

I guess the label is fake, like many German violins with Stradivari labels in them, it means 'Benedid' model, Cadiz, although it is more like a copy of CF Martin's own copies of Spanish Cadiz guitars." James Westbrook 2016

⁵ Life data as documented in the church records of Markneukirchen ("Roedel-Register").

⁶ Acta / Die Geigenmacher Innung / Neukirchen / Sa. Landes-Direction. I. Sect. 2. Abtheilung. / 1833 [changed in: "1832"] Dresden Sächs. Landeshauptarchiv / Kreishauptmannschaft Zwickau / Nr. 3290.

⁷ Also mentioned in these articles is, among others, Heinrich Anton Schatz (1806–1867), who worked for some time with C.F. Martin in New York and Pennsylvania ("Martin & Schatz") and in 1858 was guild master of the Markneukirchen violin makers' guild.

⁸ Christian Friedrich Martin, founder of Martin & Co., New York, probably worked in Vienna until about 1828, before returning to Markneukirchen and finally emigrating to the USA in 1833. Young craftsmen often went abroad at the age of 14 to 16 to learn a trade, so it can also be assumed that August Paulus came to Vienna in the early 1820s, at a time when his older cousin is said to have been a foreman in the Stauffer workshop.

⁹ The "tradition line" of the "Kunstwerkstätte für Gitarren Weissgerber" published by Richard Jacob on an advertising postcard traces the handicraft succession via his father and his apprentice Johann August Paulus to Vienna to Stauffer and Geißenhoff. At this point, the nickname "Berghansadel" for August Paulus is also handed down. Even if these data are not documentable, the oral or private family tradition, which was later published by the tradition-conscious guitar maker, is credible.

Every one of the instruments he built, known today, is a testament to his outstanding skills as a guitar maker.

Of the instruments attributed to Johann August Paulus, the vast majority – as far as is known today – have been exported to the USA.

Period of origin:

The dendrological examination of the ceiling wood by Petra & Ekkard Seidl, Markneukirchen revealed a growth period of the spruce between 1716 and 1846 (bass side 1717–1846/soprano side 1716–1846).

Corresponding with the results of the dendrochronological examination, an origin from the half of the 1850s is conceivable. Also the type of design and the tuners suggest that the period of manufacture was around 1855.

Provenance:

A handwritten letter on the history of the instrument by Marthel Thelang née Wicke was passed on with the guitar (original enclosed, see also Appendix):



*"From a master, instrument builder, Wettin Prince Ernst Heinrich Duke of Saxony, had received as a gift, the wonderful guitar. My father Ernst Wicke, chancellor of the secundogeniture library and copper engraving collection busy, received the beautiful instrument, from the boss, Dr. Erwin Hensler, by order of Prince Ernst Heinrich, in 1922, given. I wish you, my dear little Monika, that you will be able to play beautifully on this good guitar, that it will bring you much joy and that you will cherish it.
Your aunt
Marthel Thelang née Wicke
Dresden, 18.10.1987"*

Prince Ernst Heinrich Duke of Saxony (1896-1971) Source: Wikipedia

The document provides an almost complete list of previous owners, although it does not go back to the time when the instrument was made.

around 1865	first owner unknown
around 1905	Prince Ernst Heinrich Duke of Saxony (1896-1971)
1922-1987	Ernst Wicke, Dresden and Marthel Thelang née Wicke, Dresden
1987	Monika Krems, presumably Dresden
2013	Kunsthändler Kühne, Dresden
2013	Christof Hanusch, Berlin
2015/16	Restoration by Florence Ford, Berlin
2018	Collection of the Markneukirchen Museum of Musical Instruments.

It would be possible that the instrument was commissioned by the King's House for Frederick August III and his wife Luise of Austria-Tuscany in Markneukirchen. In this case, it would have been in the possession of the Saxon royal family before it was given to Prince Ernst Heinrich. According to a second hypothesis, however, the guitar could also have been made as a trade fair or exhibition

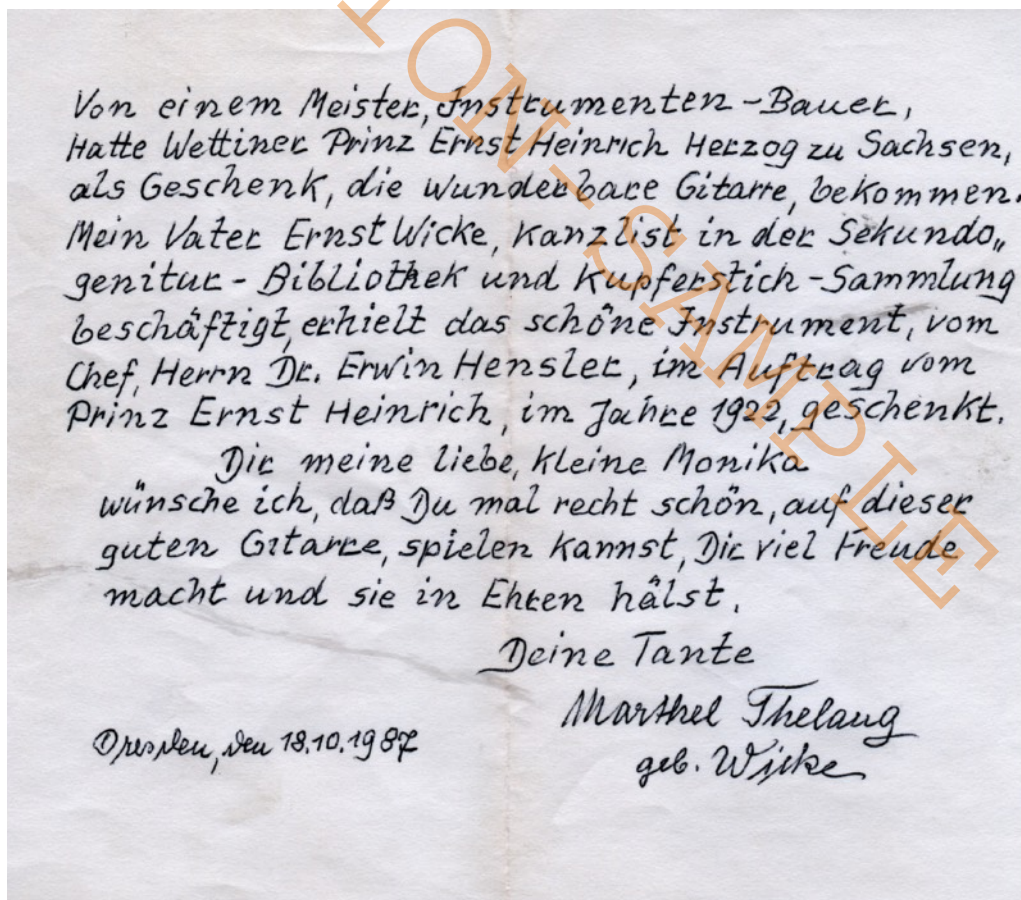
piece for the company M. Schuster Junior, where it remained in their possession until after the dissolution of the company and only later came into the possession of the prince through the personal contacts of the company heiress with the royal couple.

The instrument is without a doubt a luxurious one-of-a-kind piece, one of the most beautiful, elaborate and thus most expensive Markneukirchen guitars of its time. The fact that this elaborate instrument remained in Germany after its creation and was not exported overseas, as were most high-quality Markneukirchen guitars of this era, is probably due to the fact that it was either intended for the Saxon royal family or to serve as an exquisite exhibition piece for the renowned firm of M. Schuster jun.

Christof Hanusch, Berlin 2020



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Von einem Meister, Instrumenten-Bauer,
Hatte Wettiner Prinz Ernst Heinrich Herzog zu Sachsen,
als Geschenk, die wunderbare Gitarre, bekommen.
Mein Vater Ernst Wicke, Kanzlist in der Sekundo,
genitur-Bibliothek und Kupferstich-Sammlung
beschäftigt, erhielt das schöne Instrument, vom
Chef, Herrn Dr. Erwin Hensler, im Auftrag vom
Prinz Ernst Heinrich, im Jahre 1922, geschenkt.
Dir meine liebe, kleine Monika
wünsche ich, daß Du mal recht schön, auf dieser
guten Gitarre, spielen kannst, Dir viel Freude
macht und sie in Ehen hält.
Deine Tante
Marthel Thelang
geb. Wicke
Dresden, den 18.10.1987

Accompanying letter from Marthel Thelang née Wicke from 1987

Appendix

Spanish model, Markneukirchen around 1860
attributed to Johann August Paulus

Materials used	
Top	spruce wide rim inlay with different colored mother of pearl figures in white putty
Back	Macassar ebony/spruce veneer wide edge inlay with mother-of-pearl figures in putty with gold dust, bordered on both sides with ivory decorative strips on the middle joint
Sides	Macassar ebony/spruce veneer central three-strand decorative inlay light-dark Inlay
Endblock inlay	Ivory with decorative purfling
Binding	Ivory
Purfling	Perlmutterfiguren in weißem Kitt, mit geradem Schnurrand, vorn und seitlich
Ornaments / inlays	Semi-circular decorative inlay on the lower edge of the top, dark putty with gold dust, star of mother-of-pearl figures with decorative inlay strip like purfling
Rosette	Binding like edges, inside with herringbone pattern
Headstock	Mahogany binding of ivory, ornamental inlays of mother of pearl in putty
Headstock plate	front: Ebony binding with ivory, mother-of-pearl figures in dark putty with gold dust rear: Ebony with mother-of-pearl figures
Tuners	Very fine tuners, base plates embedded in the headstock
Neck	probably spruce, screwed veneered with ivory strips, interleaved decorative chips single row checkerboard pattern
Nut	Ivory
Fretboard	Ebony with ivory binding
Fretboard inlays	mother-of-pearl plate with engraving "M. Schuster junior Neukirchen." mother-of-pearl floral ornament at the end of the fingerboard
Frets	18 barfrets made of mother-of-pearl
Bridge	Mother-of-pearl overlay, shell-like engraved
Bridge saddle	Ivory

Condition before restoration in 2013

