



ON
DREAMS'
WINGS.
ON TIME'S
ROPES.

UNIQUE IN THE WORLD



MUSEO DELL'ARPA
VICTOR SALVI



WELCOME

*The Museo dell'Arpa Victor Salvi
welcomes you to a unique place in the world,
an inevitable stop for lovers of harp, music,
art and culture in general.*



MUSEO DELL'ARPA
VICTOR SALVI



THE MUSEO DELL'ARPA VICTOR SALVI

By opening this booklet you entered into an exclusive place, in the true sense of the word: the **Museo dell'Arpa Victor Salvi**, in fact, is the **first and only museum in the world entirely dedicated to the harp**. Once you enter through the doors, open since January 28, 2006, you will have access to a fascinating and evocative world, that of the harp culture one and its sound universe.

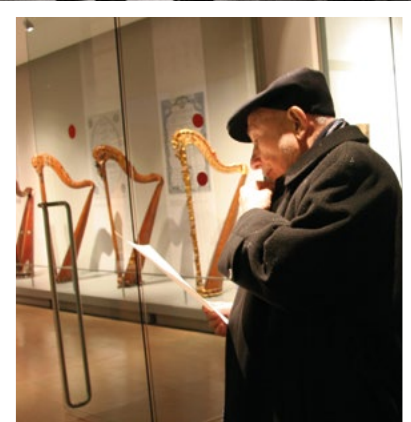


Waiting for you there is a journey that traces the history and the evolution of the instrument and will allow you to know one of the authors of this little miracle: Victor Salvi, master harpist and collector of **over 110 antique harps exhibited** in rotation inside the Museum. Together with his wife Julia he had succeeded in creating this magical space. Wrap yourself up with a unique atmosphere of the museum constantly animated by concerts, music festivals, seminars, visits and workshops. Let yourself be caught by a museum that now is a landmark of reference not only for harpists, but for all art lovers.

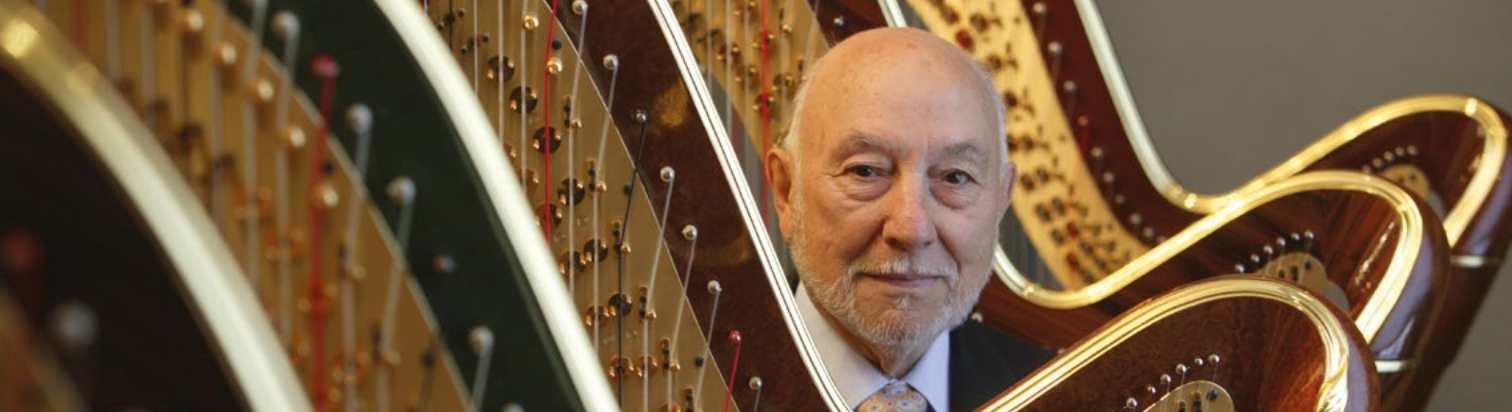


VICTOR SALVI

*At the origins of such an ambitious project,
there is the life of an extraordinary man:
Victor Salvi, the founder of Salvi Harps
and inspirer of the museum dedicated to him.*



VICTOR SALVI



EXCELLENT HARPIST AND SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS OWNER

Son of a skillful luthier from Venice relocated in Viggiano, a small town in Basilicata renowned for harp manufacturing, Victor Salvi was born in Chicago in 1920, where his father Rodolfo had emigrated in 1909 with his wife Apollonia. The youngest of four children, he was sent to study music with his sister Aida, harpist and composer of the Chicago Opera. His brother Alberto was defined by the famous Nicanor Zabaleta as “the greatest harpist of all time”. Victor, devoting himself to the music as a profession, toured all over the United States with the St. Louis Chamber Ensemble and became first harpist of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra and the NBC Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of the great Arturo Toscanini and other well-known directors as Szell, Monteux and Mitropoulos. With the help of several artisans, he decided to try creating a harp that exceeded all other existing ones in sound quality and manufacturing, and made a first prototype: in 1954, in a little workshop in New York, the first Salvi harp was born. In 1955 he left the United States and moved to Italy, his homeland. Here he founded his first company in a wonderful location in Genoa, the sixteenth-century Villa Maria, in which he soon began to receive visits from harpists, whose ears had heard rumors about new and revolutionary harps: the Salvi harps. In 1974, the business moved to Piasco, in the region of Saluzzo, renowned for the skill of artisans in woodworking, where he opened the factory in the former Wild cotton mill.

The connection with the ancient Marquisate of Saluzzo was not a coincidence. Wood craftsmanship has deep roots here: from master carpenters to sculptors and inlayers. This tradition gave rise to a work and product culture that won over Victor Salvi: for this reason, he decided to perfect his harps even more and make the Salvi trademark even more exclusive. With the company moving to Piasco, a new chapter opened in the Salvi history. The conception and philosophy were new. The capacity to optimize the sound of this instrument was new. New, because it was born from the desire to fully meet the needs of every harpist: from the beginner to the most accomplished professional. A variety of harps, a unique and inimitable quality, recognized and respected all over the world: Salvi Harps.

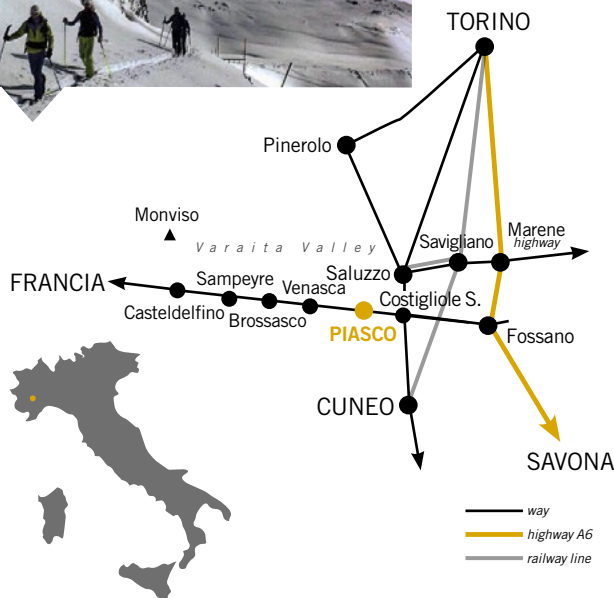
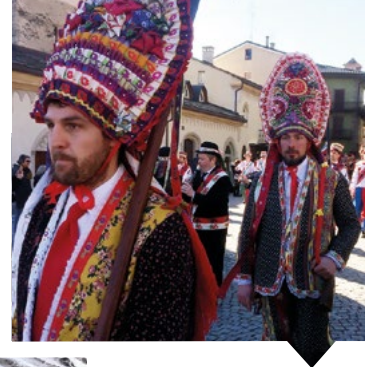
Today, Victor Salvi is recognized and respected worldwide for these innovations and continuous support to harpists and their musical activity.

He received prestigious international awards: World Harp Congress in 1996 awarded him the Distinguished Award for Service to the International Harp Community and in 2004, he became an honorary member of the Royal College of Music in the presence of Prince Charles. In his project, Victor Salvi brought together the great passions that have always animated his family: the harp and making stringed instruments. Mr. Victor Salvi passed away Sunday 10th May, at the age of 95.



IN THE HEART OF THE VARAITA VALLEY

The **Museo dell'Arpa Victor Salvi** is located in Piasco, in the region of Cuneo and in the heart of the **Varaita Valley**. These lands, a few kilometers far from Saluzzo, boast a renowned tradition in wood handcraft. The craftsmanship of these marquetry masters conquered Victor Salvi who decided to open his company right here: Salvi Harps.



In Varaita Valley the excellence of human knowledge is accompanied by the generosity of nature, in an area of Italy that offers a cultural and gastronomic richness with few rivals in the world. Visiting the Museum is an opportunity to discover the environmental heritage of the area and taste the typical flavors of Occitan cuisine.



A MUSEUM RICH IN LIFE AND ACTIVITIES

The **Museo dell'Arpa Victor Salvi** is much more than a museum, it is a place of meeting and exchange, an environment full of life and energy. Within its walls there is a heart that throbs passion, the one of the operators who take care of it to guarantee an unforgettable experience and an always updated offer. There is always news: in addition to the **exhibition** "The evolution of the harp" and **educational activities** for individuals and institutions,

the Museum supports and organizes **concerts** and refined **selected music festivals** with internationally renowned harpists and musicians. The activities are not limited to Piasco, but extend throughout the territory. As is the case, for example, of the special collaboration with the project "Eccellenza incontra Eccellenza", or the presence in the prestigious Royal Palace of Venaria, which hosts permanently one of the antique harps of the collection.



THE EVOLUTION OF THE HARP:

THE ORIGINS, SÉBASTIAN ERARD,
VICTOR SALVI

The unison of poetry and ingenuity can create extraordinary wonders. The harp is one of them. The exhibition **“The evolution of the harp: the origins, Sébastien Erard, Victor Salvi”** pays homage to one of these wonders. A series of “jewels” is on display, selected with strict philological criteria to **illustrate the development of the harp in the world from antiquity to present.**

The focus is on the creative genius of Sébastien Erard and Victor Salvi: the first as the double action inventor that revolutionized the way the harp is played. The second as his worthy heir in the ability of anticipating and interpreting the evolution of the instrument, combining artisan passion and the vocation for research. Only a visit can give you the opportunity to discover step by step the wonder of this museum full of charm and magic. So...have a good journey!

The Museum aims to explore this artistic and cultural heritage and to tell through the exhibition of valuable pieces its evolution all over the continent. The harp has been a common instrument in Sub-Saharan Africa since the end of the 2nd century BC. The earliest illustrations can be found on a series of rock carvings which probably date back to the 1st century BC in Egypt. In African history its notes played a crucial role in marking times, activities and events of heterogeneous populations involving cultural, social, religious and anthropological aspects. During the early part of the 20th century tourism began to thrive. To take advantage of this new economical development, African artisans began to carve fictional sculptures of the harp from precious materials. These sculptures were considered as a pretext and showed no support to music.

THE HARP IN AFRICA



The first iconographic source to bear witness to the existence of the harp in Asia dates back to the 1st Century BC in China, and shows us instruments which are similar to the Mesopotamian angular harps, used also in Japan. Burma, known today as Myanmar, did not welcome the angular harp, preferring the saung-gauk, the Burmese arched harp. This kind of harp is considered having a strong spiritual power, because during the construction process all the female spirits are invited to reside inside the instrument. The same kind of arched harp, yet less elaborate than the Burmese instrument, was used in the region known as the Golden Triangle, which overlaps with Laos, Myanmar and Thailand, while in the Philippines the harp was introduced thanks to the Jesuit's missionary presence, showing very similar characteristics to that of the Latin American harps. In the museum are collected some of the most fascinating examples of this region of the world, in a game of references that reveals the dense network of interlacing of the cultural universe.

THE HARP IN ASIA



The history of the harp in Europe is a journey from the thousand facets, characterized by a constant technical evolution in search of a better sound, and vibrations able to resonate straight on the soul. This is the principle that explains the functioning of mechanisms that work on the harps in order to produce chromatic sounds. The oldest example is the German hook harp (Hakenharfe), whose existence was declared as early as the end of the 16th century, the starting point for the first pedal harps, followed by the Dital Harp built by John Egan in about 1820. An ample space is deserved by the Welsh triple harps, descendants from Italian baroque harp, shown in different samples that describe a gradual process of evolution, made of changes in the structure and sound to be in step with the musical taste of the time.

THE HARP IN EUROPE NON – PEDAL HARPS



Between the end of the 17th century and the beginning of the 18th century some German harp manufacturers had the idea of linking levers and rods so they could be controlled by some pedals at the bottom of the instrument. In this way the harp player was no longer forced to lift his hands from the strings during the performance: this is how the pedal harp was born. In a short time it obtained an excellent feedback from harpists. The collection of the Museo dell'Arpa Victor Salvi includes instruments with four different single action types of mechanisms: Sabots ("hoof") or crochets ("hook"), bequilles ("crutch"), chevilles tournantes ("rotating pegs") and fourchettes ("fork").

SÉBASTIEN ERARD SINGLE ACTION PEDAL HARP



Sébastien Erard, famous piano and harp maker, was undoubtedly a pioneer in the music world and the Museum undertakes to pay a worthy tribute to his genius. There are numerous innovations for harps and pianos, which have become standard for manufacturers of all the world. It was due to him the invention of the double action mechanism "à fourchettes", to allow the executor to play in any key or chromatic scale: a revolution for the entire harp universe. At the end of 1811 the patent was made official and he achieved a great success in the English and French musical world. The system of Erard was also adopted by other harp makers like Domény and Dodd. The double action harp is almost the only one in use today, the result of constant efforts of refined minds, which the Museum wants to celebrate with the exposition of its most valuable pieces.

SÉBASTIEN ERARD

DOUBLE
ACTION
PEDAL HARP



Practical Info and charges

Opening hours:

October - May

From Sunday to Friday: 10am - 1pm • 2pm - 5pm
(last admission: 4.30pm)

Saturday closed. (Only open on bookings of groups and schools)

June - September

From Monday to Friday: 10am - 1pm • 2pm - 5pm
(last admission: 4.30pm)

Saturday closed. (Only open on bookings of groups and schools)

Sunday only the 1st and the 3rd of the month : 2.30pm - 6.30pm
(last admission: 6pm)

Fares:

The guided tour is included in the entrance fee

Full price 7,00 €

Reduced price 4,00 € (6 to 12 years of age and over 65)

Free admission Children up to 5, harpists, harp class students, Severely disabled people.

Groups: contact the Museum

Accessibility:

- The tour is available for partially sighted and blind people.
- Disabled parking available inside upon request.
- The museum is allowed access to small and medium-sized animals provided with a leash and a muzzle.



MUSEO DELL'ARPA VICTOR SALVI
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THE ART OF THE RESTORATION

The Restoration Workshop



The **Restoration Workshop** is an extremely important part of the Museo dell'Arpa Victor Salvi and **and is open to any institution or individual** that wishes to restore their antique harp.

All antique harps of the collection at the Museo dell'Arpa Victor Salvi undergo strict conservative restoration, which has the aim of bringing them back, as much as possible, to a similar state to the original one. **Restoring an antique harp is divided into three main phases.**

Firstly, there is the luthier restoration of the instrument, that is, all of the structural wooden parts that generally need to be cleaned and consolidated. The second phase regards the recovery of the mechanical parts that must be disassembled, cleaned, lubricated and reassembled. The third phase finally regards the decorative part of the instrument: very often, it is necessary to make additions to the missing parts, especially in the cases of sculptures and "pastiglia" or pastework reliefs, which is very common in harp decorations in the nineteenth century.

During restoration, there is always the possibility to study the structural characteristics of harps, measure the thickness of the wood, or analyse how the mechanism functions.

Aldo Baudino Restorer



FONDAZIONE  GRI



Con il patrocinio di



Comune di Piasco

President Victor Salvi Jr
Director Roberta Scarzello

Thanks to **Ann Fierens**
for the Historical and Phylogenetical advice.

Museographer Didier Blin
Graphical layout Bosio.Associati - Savigliano

Photographs by
Pino Dell'Aquila
Lina Campanelli, Francesco Coppolecchia
and Glaucio Poggioli
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