THE HARP GUITARS OF MARIO MACCAFERRI

GREGG MINER

c.1923 (Type 1) | Early 1920s (Practice HG) | c.1923-1927 (Type 2a) | c.1923-1927 (Type 2b) | c.1923-1927 (Type 2c) | c.1923-1927 (Type 3) | Mid 1920s (Type 4) | c.1928 (Type 5) | c.1932 (Type 6) | 1932-1933 (Type 7)

Contents

Preface

Since the last updates of my various Maccaferri articles (originally published on Harpguitars.net in 2006 and 2007), five new Maccaferri harp guitar specimens have come to light. Though each was previously known from historical photographs, each now presents a *surviving* example of a "Type" for our examination. More importantly, two of the new instruments are from the mid-to-late 1920s catalogs *but are dated "1923*." This then moves up the introduction and production of these catalog instruments from 1926 to 1923, while confirming that Maccaferri set up his own Cento shop in 1923 as he stated in his *American Lutherie #7* interview in 1986.

The new 2017 publication *Mario Maccaferri: a luthier in Cento, Paris and New York*, edited by Giovanni Intelisano, reinforces the timeline with this delightful new photograph of a young Maccaferri with one of his eventual catalog harp guitars. It now seems quite likely that this was taken around 1923 when the enterprising young performing and luthier virtuoso was just 23 himself.

I also thought it a good time to clarify the date of the second Maccaferri catalog. Previously, the date of this second catalog was "1928/1929" (Wright's original guess), "1928" (Intelisano's 1990 book, Tubbs' thesis) and "1926" (from the 2017 publication – clearly an error, as a 1927 prize is listed on the catalog's cover). I would circa date it to late 1927; however there is evidence from Giovanni Intelisano that early 1928 is a possibility.

One of the conundrums of my previously published web article was the timeline – both the *sequence* and the true *dates* – of Maccaferri's many experimental harp guitars. Knowing now that the general period has moved up a few years, it behooves us all to reconsider the circa-dating of all the known production and experimental harp guitars. Of course, knowing the timeline specifics of Maccaferri's *activities* and *location* would help immensely. From the information I've gathered so far, the impression is that his residence and workshop (a separate workshop or a home workshop) jumped around between Cento, London and Paris without rhyme or reason – as all the while he toured as a performer throughout Europe! *This* would make a great research project for someone truly dedicated. (As a start, Jeremy Tubbs' PHD thesis includes a detailed list of concert dates and locations.) Meanwhile, the study of the evolution of Maccaferri's designs and experiments remains as fascinating as before, and I don't have any proof yet regarding the order I show as "Types" that may or may not fall in the actual sequence of their historical appearance. Regardless, I've re-ordered this sequence somewhat since my original article into a new hypothetical sequence. Specifically, the catalog line has moved back to become "Type 2" *after* the similar, more "primitive" variant, and the Selmer now comes last). I remain hopeful to hear the opinions of others with more expertise. I've condensed all of my previous Maccaferri articles and information into this single new "book." Enjoy – and please, comment and contribute to this ongoing work!

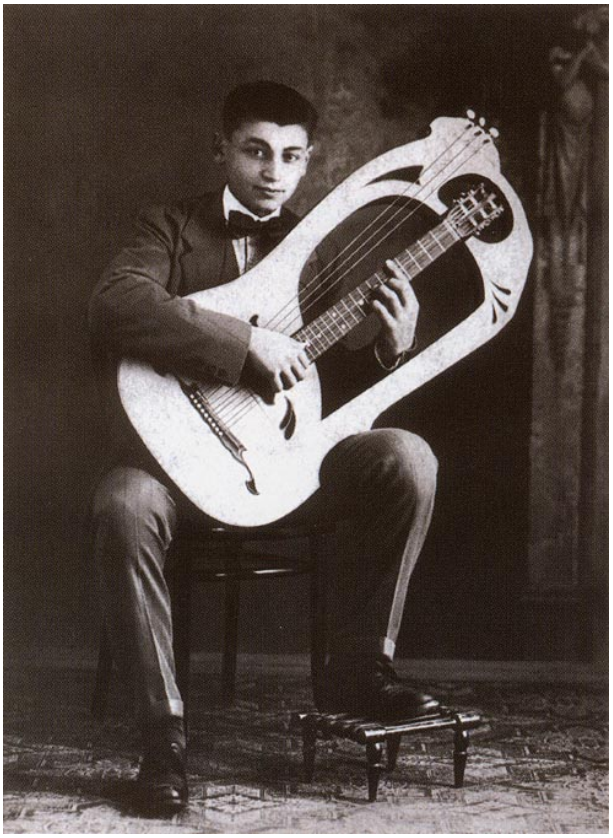
Mario Maccaferri: Concert Harp Guitarist

"I have always been an advocator of more than six strings."
- Mario Maccaferri, 1976

I know what you're thinking. "Wasn't Maccaferri that Django guitar guy?" Or perhaps, "Oh yeah – he made those cheap plastic guitars."

All true. But before all that, Maccaferri was a famous touring concert guitarist (what we call a "classical guitarist" today), who, by all accounts, gave Segovia quite a run for his money. And like many of the early European virtuoso performers, Maccaferri dabbled in the harp guitar. *A lot.*

Many sections of the Harpguitars.net web site show the extent (by no means complete) to which past performers and builders abroad played or built harp guitars – in many cases not even considering them "harp guitars," but simply as guitars with a couple of extra useful bass strings. The odds of encountering the harp guitar were further stacked in Maccaferri's favor, since he was fortunate enough to be apprenticed to the amazing Luigi Mozzani at only 11 years of age. Below is a photo of young Mario with a stupendous Mozzani double-arm "*chitarra-lyra*" harp guitar. What an incredible opportunity for the youngster!

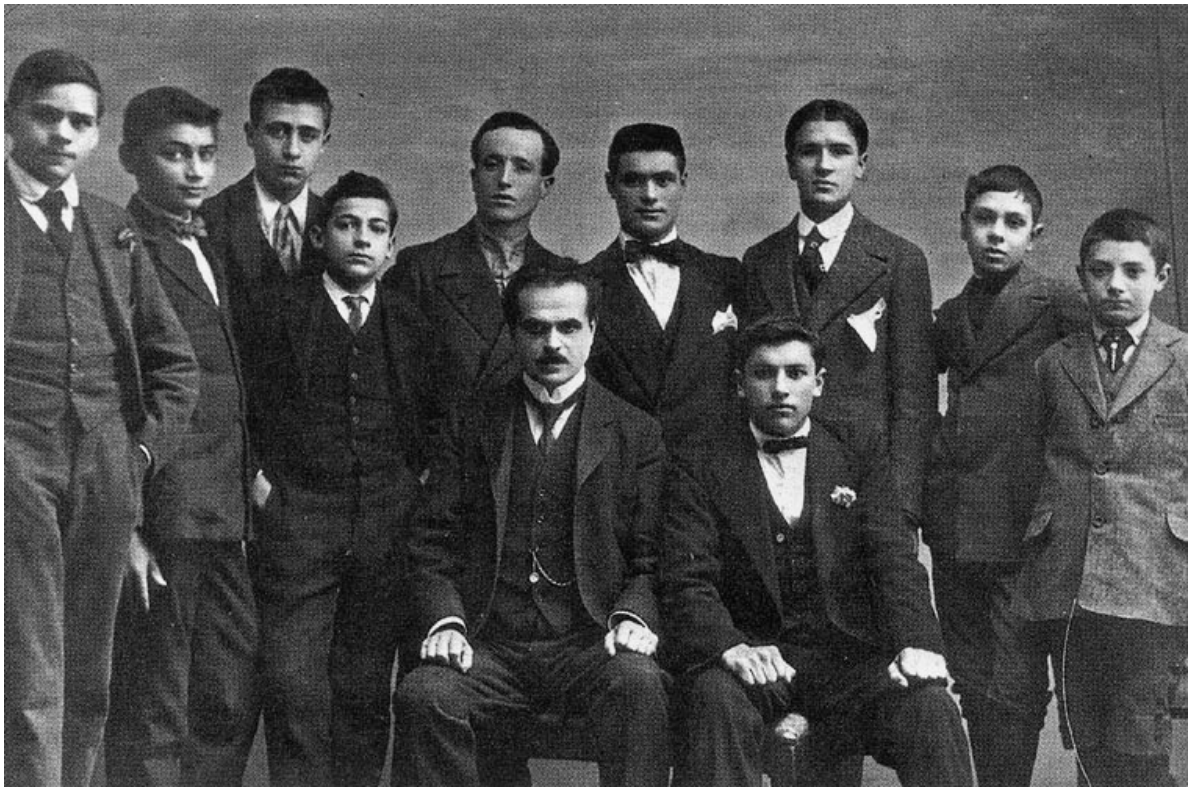


1916: Mario Maccaferri, age 16, with a Mozzani harp guitar.

In this opening chapter, I hope to shed a little more light on the effect that Mozzani's harp guitars truly had on Maccaferri. With an intimate relationship with the instrument that lasted at least *twenty-four* years, compared to only two or three years with the more famous Selmer jazz guitars, it certainly seems worthy of more discussion and study.

Humble Beginnings to Expert Luthier

Mario Maccaferri was born on May 20, 1900, in Cento, a small town about 30 km from Bologna in northwest Italy. He was the second youngest of eight children, all boys, and the only family member to become interested in music. He left school at the age of nine, taking on various jobs including apprentice carpenter. Two years later, in 1911, young Mario was apprenticed to famed guitarist and luthier Luigi Mozzani, who had established a school of lutherie in Cento in 1908. Mozzani's own career could fill a book (and does – twice), and also has his own special section on Harpguitars.net.



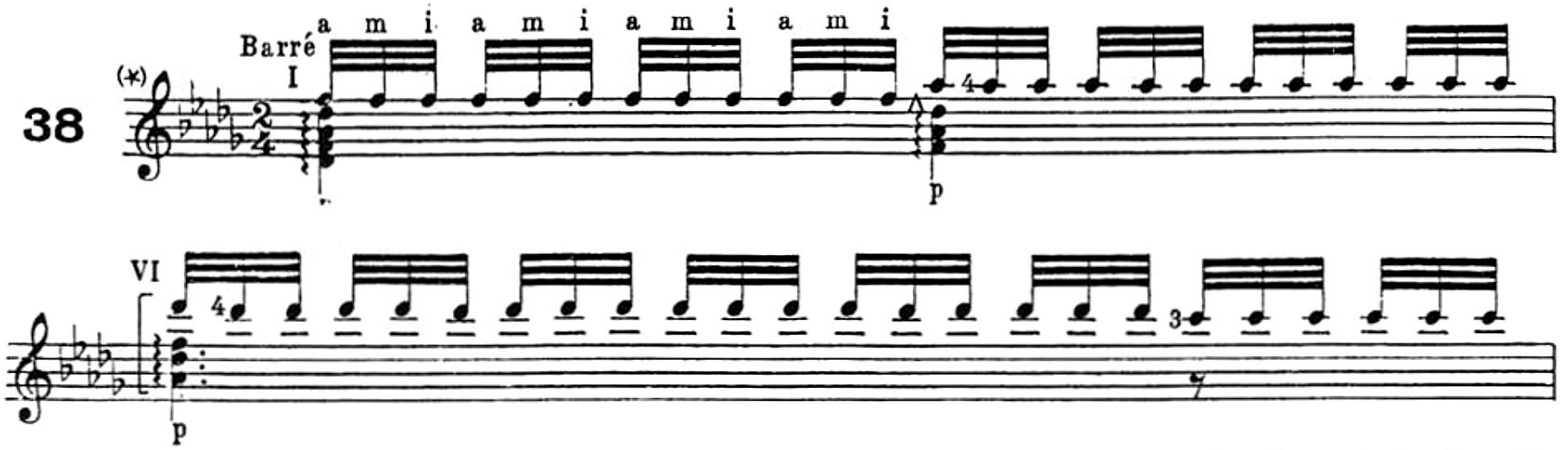
Mozzani with his apprentices c.1915. Mario is second from left.

According to researcher Michael Wright, Maccaferri "rose to become Mozzani's premier disciple, learning to make guitars, violins and mandolins and eventually supervising other apprentices." Paul Hostetter adds that "the young Maccaferri assiduously followed his master's footsteps, bearing his influence for the rest of his life." Maccaferri himself, in his 1976 interview with George Clinton, describes how *"I was about twelve years of age when Mr. Mozzani made up his mind to teach me the guitar. It was against my own wishes but he won. He kept me playing in the first position for a year until, finally, one day he showed me how to play some chords and then I began to like it. We got on fine after that."*

Further details about Maccaferri's tenure with Mozzani are less clear. The consensus is that Maccaferri left after 1922 to set up his own shop in 1923, which he himself stated in 1986. A full line of Maccaferri's instruments first appeared in a 1926 catalog alongside Mozzani's own. Intelisano's Mozzani book implies that during the 1921-1928 time frame, Maccaferri (along with C. Melloni) was assigned to the bowed instrument department – according to Wright, as "Senior Instructor," according to François Charle as an "advisor." In his *American Lutherie* interview, Maccaferri doesn't mention Mozzani after 1923, and adds "in August of 1927, I left Cento for Paris." As a matter of note, Maccaferri won three Gold Medals for his own violins in 1926 and 1927. How Maccaferri managed this purported advisory position with Mozzani, while also designing and building his own instruments, setting up his own shop (1923), touring Europe (1923-27) and living in Paris to work for his uncle's accordion business (1927) is a mystery, and definitely warrants further investigation!

Guitar Virtuoso

Maccaferri's tutelage under Mozzani consisted of two distinct areas. Besides the obvious influence of Mozzani's instrument designs, which led to Maccaferri's own experiments in harp guitar design and construction, Mozzani also instilled in Maccaferri a deep passion for playing the classical guitar. Mozzani's influence took specific form, in that Maccaferri's preferred instrument remained the harp guitar for the bulk of his performing career, and in adopting his mentor's somewhat controversial use of a metal thumbpick in combination with fingernails. Maccaferri said that the thumbpick was "more efficient for the particular type of music" he played, and explained that his thumb technique was to "go through" the string, resting on the adjacent string. He also claimed it facilitated his trademark tremolo – which was a continual ***a-m-i-a-m-i*** (without the thumb being inserted as a fourth beat). This "continuous tremolo" appears in Mozzani's guitar exercise book, and was essentially the same as that made famous by the popular Genoese harp-guitarist Pasquale Taraffo.



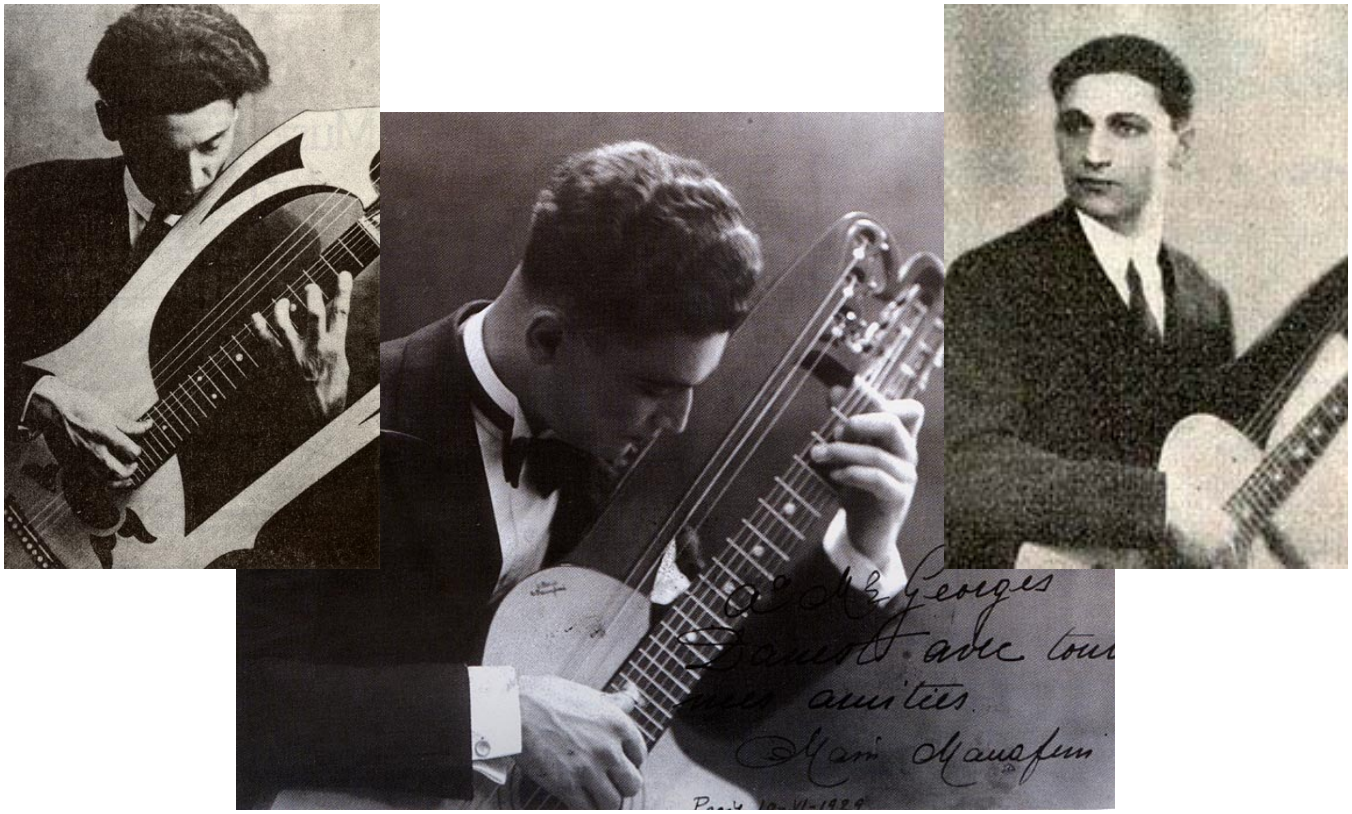
(*) (Esercizio per il « tremolo continuato ». - Molta attenzione al movimento della destra. Il pollice scivola fino alla seconda corda, mentre il tremolo sulla prima corda prosegue senza interruzione).

From *Luigi Mozzani: Esercizi di Tecnica Superiore*, Bèrben Edizioni musicali ©1967

Despite the occasional photograph of Maccaferri *sans* thumbpick, he never abandoned it. Luthier John Monteleone – who became Mario's great friend in 1977 (and later worked on Maccaferri's personal Mozzani collection) – recalls how Maccaferri's arrival was always preceded by the sound of his metal thumbpick jangling within its metal case in his pocket!

Hostetter adds that “Maestro Mozzani, a superb guitarist and composer for the instrument in his own right, was quite proud of Mario Maccaferri, whom he regarded as a master luthier, musician and peer - an honor never bestowed upon any other of his many protégés.” While with Mozzani, Maccaferri also enrolled at the Sienna Academy (or Conservatory) of Music, beginning his studies in1916 and graduating with the highest diploma and all honors in 1922. In 1926, the Conservatory named Maccaferri “Professor of Guitar and Music."

Above: Maccaferri's right hand position, including metal thumbpick. Below: Maccaferri performing through the years.



By most accounts, Maccaferri was already giving local concerts by 1920. His touring career is reported to have begun in 1923 (though Maccaferri himself gives the date of his first concert as 1926), and took him over the next several years to Italy, Switzerland, France, Germany, Austria, Yugoslavia, Belgium and England, with stops in most of the key cities in Europe. The timeline below illustrates that he was never exclusively a touring concert artist, but constantly juggled this very successful career with continuing experiments and successes in lutherie, while also undertaking several relocations. The first move was to Paris in 1927, next to London in 1929, then back to Paris in 1931 to create Selmer's guitar-making facility. Along with his performances, Maccaferri also taught guitar, often to very illustrious clients, such as the Prince of Wales.

And how was Maccaferri received as a classical guitarist?

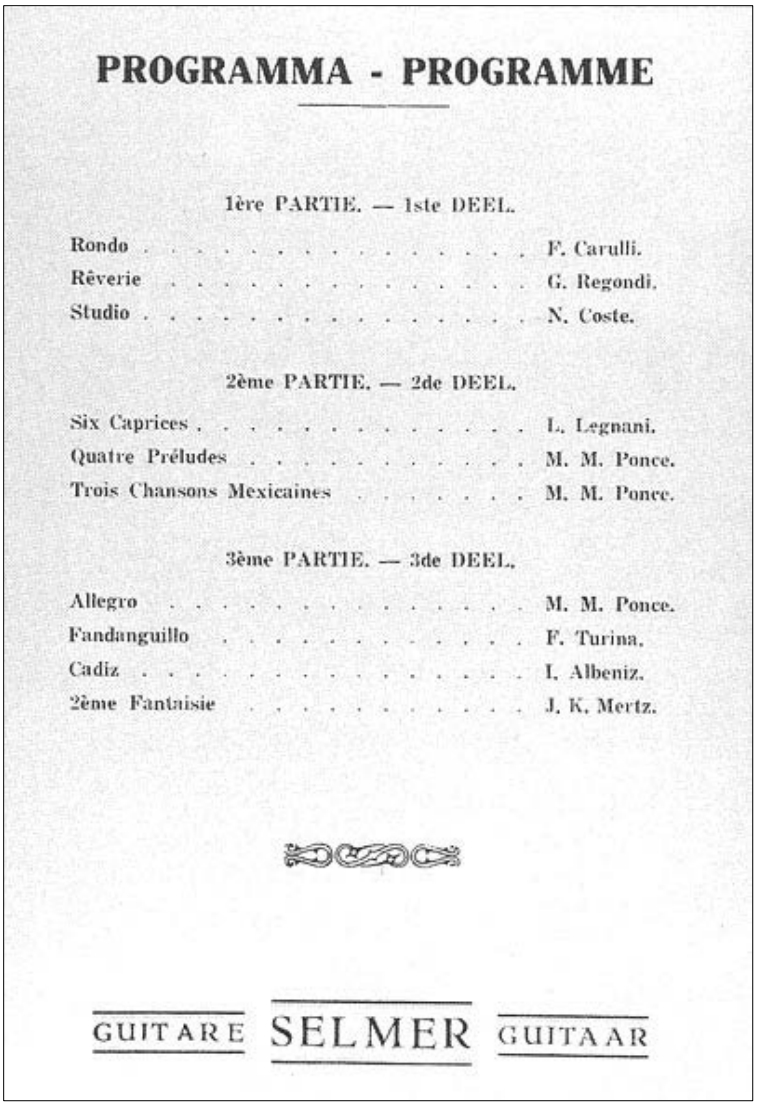
two as seminal influences on modern classical guitar." Wright further reports that in 1926, Maccaferri met and became friends with Segovia.

Maccaferri's repertoire included well-known works by Sor, Coste, Bach, Granados, Tarrega and his mentor, Mozzani. Wright states that "One of his treasured pieces was Sor's beautiful "Mozart Variations," while Charle (in a rare reference to Maccaferri's harp guitar) writes: "He particularly liked to play on them the well-known Bach prelude."

Maccaferri played the program at right on May 24, 1932. At least four of the guitarist/ composers listed were known for their writing for extended range (harp) guitars.

A detailed list of concert dates, programs, repertoire and analysis can be found in Jeremy Tubbs' PHD dissertation.

Wright states: "His performances were infused with his strong, romantic personality," adding that (due to his use of the thumbpick) "he was reportedly able to develop remarkably facile tremolo technique." Charle reports: "Judging by the writings of contemporary critics who compared him to Andres Segovia, he must have been an excellent guitarist. For several years, Maccaferri and Segovia were the two leading guitarists of European renown…" Wright concurs, stating that "Maccaferri was regarded by contemporaries as being on a par with the late Segovia, ranking right behind the Maestro in popular appeal in European guitar circles. Had events not transpired as they did, we might today regard the


PROGRAMMA - PROGRAMME

1ère PARTIE. — 1ste DEEL.

Rondo	F. Carulli.
Rêverie	G. Regondi.
Studio	N. Coste.

2ème PARTIE. — 2de DEEL.

Six Caprices	L. Legnani.
Quatre Préludes	M. M. Ponce.
Trois Chansons Mexicaines	M. M. Ponce.

3ème PARTIE. — 3de DEEL.

Allegro	M. M. Ponce.
Fandanguillo	F. Turina.
Cadiz	I. Albeniz.
2ème Fantaisie	J. K. Mertz.

GUITARE SELMER GUITAAR

Or is it *Harp* Guitar Virtuoso?

Which brings us to the topic of harp guitars….

As I stated at the beginning, harp guitars – whether they looked like fairly normal guitars with just one floating string, or like some mythical, fantastic dream like Mozzani's – seem not to have caused the notice or comment that harp guitars do today. And even today, many modern researchers and writers don't appear that curious or fascinated with the details of this guitar variation when they come across it as part of their research. As this is my passion, I'm naturally a bit dismayed by this blasé attitude. While the critics were favorably comparing Maccaferri with the "standard-setting" Segovia, did they have *no* comment on the dramatic differences of their instruments?! If unimpressed by the *visual* aspects of the instruments, did they consider the three extra bass strings similarly insignificant? Were Mozzani, Maccaferri and similar "extended range guitarists" *not* boasting of the fact that "normal 6-string" classical guitarists could not, in fact, play some of the repertoire *without* extra sub-bass strings? Certainly, one comes across in publicity material images of the instruments, and occasional mention of a "chitarra-lyra" or similar, but I haven't seen much else. If not the critics or concert promoters, did the *public itself* ever take special notice of Maccaferri's assorted harp guitar creations? I cannot help but wonder!

During his entire decade or so of public performing, Maccaferri used a variety of harp guitars. I strongly suspect that his very first concert in Milan was on either a 9-course Mozzani dual arm instrument or his own 9-course instrument shown here. In fact, of all the photos I have seen from his concert period, nearly all show him with a harp guitar. Only a couple of images - of which two are Selmer promotional photos, and one a program illustration – show him playing a 6-string. These instruments are shown and discussed in detail below. Maccaferri first played some of the instruments created by Mozzani (at least three different harp guitar models), then switched to his own harp guitars beginning in 1923 – again, using several different models or experimental instruments.

Maccaferri with his first harp guitar model, created by 1923 (image from his c.1927 Cento catalog).

Frustratingly, in all the interviews with Maccaferri, if the subject comes up (which is maddeningly rare), he provides few details of these instruments. Despite the many experimental instruments shown below, the 9-course (6+3) variant certainly appears to have been his preferred instrument, and on this he offered these comments. He begins with "...the extra three strings added a certain amount of harmony to the playing because of the *sympathetic vibrations*" (*italics mine -GM*). But he then describes how he had "a lot of music written for that stringing" - explaining how he played the Bach prelude in A minor, rather than D minor, "because of the three extra strings" (meaning he lowered it a fourth, as his 9-string went a fourth lower; thus, he of course *played* the strings).

Maccaferri also remembered the exact program for his first concert, rather boldly given in Milan three months after Segovia played the same hall! The pieces, which I suspect included "a lot of music written for that stringing," included the Sonata No. 22 in C by Sor, a few things by Coste, Mozzani, the Prelude, Gavotte, and Courante of Bach, Granados, pieces by Tarrega, and the last piece, Fantasia No. 3 by Mertz. Again, I am pretty thoroughly convinced that Maccaferri gave his concert debut on a 9-course harp guitar, and never looked back, playing a succession of new harp guitars of his own design throughout his several-year concert career.

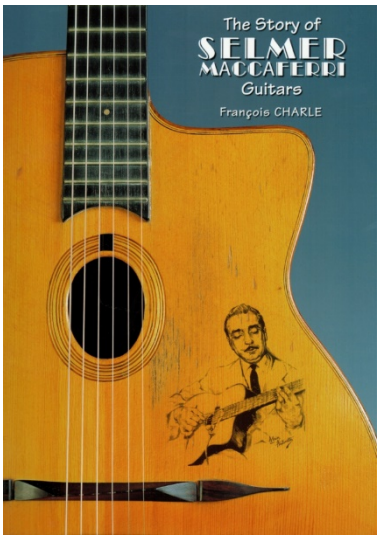
Note: Like most Europeans, Maccaferri never referred to his instruments as "harp guitars." According to Monteleone, he referred to them as *lyra-guitars* (after Mozzani) or "guitars with bass strings." In his interviews, he just calls them "9-string guitars."

Are there any surviving Maccaferri recordings, and is he playing 6-string or harp guitar on them? Yes! Maccaferri recorded 8 sides (selections) for Columbia in 1929, at the height of his performing career. The pieces are listed below, along with one of the rare 78's (from Charle's book).

In 2005, ever-alert Maccaferri fan Michael Simmons pointed me to Djangobooks.com, where owner Michael Horowitz had posted MP3s of two of these rare records. There, you can listen to the Bach and Granados pieces. As I had fervently hoped, *both* performances were played on an obvious 9-course harp guitar, as the low B and D are clearly heard!

MARIO MACCAFERRI'S RECORDINGS FOR COLUMBIA

March 1929	
WL 1496 - 1 Aria con Variazione	Co D - 19186
WL 1497 - 1 Menuet n°3 (opus II)	Co D - 19187
WL 1498 - 1 Carmela	Co D - 19187
WL 1499 - 1 The passing regiment	Co D - 19187
April 1929	
WL 1550 - 2 Fifth dance (Granados)	Co D - 19203
WL 1551 - 1 Second fantasia (I) (JK Mertz)	Co D - 19202
WL 1552 - 1 Second fantasia (II) (JK Mertz)	Co D - 19202
WL 1553 - 1 Courante (JS Bach)	Co D - 19203



Regardless of the exact provenance of his harp guitars, it is clear that Maccaferri never fully abandoned his lutherie experiments throughout his many years of concert tours. Ultimately, his restless design innovations led to his relationship with the Selmer Company, and in 1931 he relocated to Paris to head the new guitar making facility. Here I would strongly suggest a short detour in our story to take time out to read *The Story of Selmer Maccaferri Guitars* by François Charle (I'll explore the Selmer harp guitars in detail below, but not the Company's story). In the meantime, suffice it to say that these guitars soon became legendary (ironically, the steel string versions, *not* Maccaferri's preferred gut-strung models) – due in most part to being in the hands of the equally legendary Django Reinhardt. Also important to note is that Maccaferri left Selmer after only two years over a contract clause – leaving his guitar designs behind.

End of a Brilliant Career…

About halfway through this brief period with Selmer, Maccaferri continued with his other passion, resuming his concert tours of Europe. Tragically, we can never know what might have become of his still-growing reputation, the classical guitar music world, or, indeed, of harp guitars as accepted classical instruments. In the summer of 1933, he fractured his right hand in a freak swimming accident, bringing his career as a concert classical guitarist to a premature end. After six months of recuperation, he was unable to play with the same dexterity, but cleverly found a way to continue performing still. As he knew his playing was not up to his former standards, Maccaferri performed wearing a mask, billing himself as "The Unknown Guitarist." Throughout 1934 he played smaller clubs and Parisian cafes with this act – an innovative end to a very creative musical career.

…but Start of Another: *Plastics!*

In 1935, his performances came to a permanent end when he hit upon yet another ingenious idea: plastic reeds for saxophones and other woodwind instruments. Clearly not one to look back, but always forward, Mario Maccaferri took a strange detour which led, for the next several decades, to the world of plastics. This topic is outside the scope of my own article, but I would send readers to Michael Wright's book *Guitar Stories Volume Two* or Jeremy Tubbs' detailed thesis. (I love the story of how Maccaferri sold the idea of his plastic ukulele by pulling one out of a live fish tank and – in tune – playing it!)

Maccaferri began this phase of his career first with a hugely successful reed business, followed by clothespins, bathroom tile, cassette tape housings, and of course, musical instruments, beginning with guitars. By this time, he had transplanted to New York, and while America did not exactly embrace the inexpensive plastic guitars, they did go crazy for his plastic ukuleles, which sold in the millions. Surprisingly, the guitars are said to sound pretty darn good, considering the materials and cost involved. Less successful were the plastic violins, Maccaferri's last invention in 1989.

Nevertheless, Maccaferri became so prosperous that, according to John Monteleone, he was not only able to take his family on trips to Italy from time to time, he would ship his huge New York Cadillac over for the trips. John laughed as he described how Maccaferri would have to back up and forward about four times just to turn a corner on the narrow Italian streets! Monteleone thinks that the 1980s were a "second childhood" for Maccaferri - when he went back to creating new experimental guitars. After faithfully building one such wooden instrument from Maccaferri's blueprints, Monteleone was asked the very day after delivery to come to Maccaferri's and "bring your tools." Though thrilled with John's results, Mario was still not satisfied. Like a kid in a candy store, he and John took the saber saw to the back of the brand-new guitar and "tore into it"....

On April 16, 1993, Mario Maccaferri passed away, at the age of 92. All in all, an amazing career, though I have one regret…if only he had made a ***plastic Maccaferri harp guitar***!

Mario Maccaferri Timeline

1900	Born in Cento
1911	Begins apprenticeship with Mozzani (both in lutherie and as a guitar student)
1916 or 1918	Enrolls in the Sienna Academy of Music
1917-1918	1 year in the army (Maccaferri stated 1915, others say 1917; however, *18* was the normal age to begin service)
1922	His last year as a Mozzani employee. Graduates from the Academy (?)
1923	Opens his own shop in Cento
1923-1927	Tours Italy, Switzerland, France & Germany (and likely elsewhere) as concert guitarist
1926	Receives "professorship" from Sienna Academy (possibly his sole graduation?)
1926-1927	Receives 3 Gold Medals for his violins
1927	Moves to Paris, working in uncle's accordion business Catalog of Maccaferri instrument line (Cento shop)
1928	Moves to London (he may have moved there in 1929) Tours continue in Austria, Yugoslavia & Germany (and likely elsewhere)
1929	Records 8 sides for Columbia in Paris
1931	Meets with Selmer in London, moves to Paris to head new guitar production facility
1932	Production undergoing, resumes touring in Europe
1933	Severs relationship with Selmer Fractures wrist and recovers for 6 months.
1934	Begins smaller club appearances as "the unknown guitarist"
1935	Starts new plastic reed business.
1936-1939	Moves to New York (he appears to have first gone over in 1936, then was back and forth until his permanent move due to the war)
1951	Returns to Italy to purchase 5 Mozzani harp guitars
1950-1960s	Develops plastic guitars and ukuleles
1979	Befriends John Monteleone and works on new projects
1989/1990	Develops plastic violin
1993	Passes away

We continue now with a full examination of Mario Maccaferri's harp guitars.

Introduction to the Models

Before Django picked up his first Selmer, before Mario Maccaferri even considered making steel-string guitars – let alone inadvertently creating *the* seminal Gypsy jazz guitar – there were the Maccaferri gut-strung "concert" guitars.

As Maccaferri himself was a renowned classical guitarist, touring Europe periodically from 1923 until the early 1930s, naturally his instruments were exclusively gut and silk strung. However, these were not standard six-string "Spanish style" guitars, but for the most part, an array of *harp guitars* of Maccaferri's own design. Indeed, there seem to be many more surviving photos of Maccaferri with a harp guitar than a standard six-string. This unique instrument choice was the direct result of Maccaferri's long tenure with Luigi Mozzani, of Cento, Italy, who specialized in harp guitars, including some of the most distinctive designs ever imagined. Just as Mozzani focused on creating and building harp guitars with extra bass strings and utilizing these same instruments for his performances, so too did many of his students, especially his prize pupil Mario Maccaferri.

Mozzani's *chitarra-lyras* were most commonly 9-course instruments with 3 sub-bass strings. Maccaferri, who began his apprenticeship with Mozzani in 1911 (at age 11), was involved directly in the construction of these instruments, and so learned all of their intimate details. Within a dozen years he had created his own harp guitars based on Mozzani's single arm designs, though sufficiently different to be uniquely his own. By all accounts, Maccaferri's goal in developing these instruments was (like Mozzani) to create a louder and better-toned concert instrument. Visually, I would describe them as being more "modern-looking" than Mozzani's. Tonally (being fortunate enough to own both Mozzani and Maccaferri harp guitars), I would say they are very similar, sounding quite lovely, with great bass response. Surprisingly, however, neither projects as well as a typical modern classical guitar, not even Maccaferri's incredibly elaborate double-Brazilian rosewood-walled, double-soundboard, clamshell projector experimental harp guitar.

One wonders what Mozzani thought of his apprentice's efforts, or if any of his *own* construction techniques or designs were in turn influenced by his much younger disciple. In 1923, Maccaferri set up his own shop in Cento, where he “advertised himself as a maker of all fretted instruments, offering nine different guitar models, seven various mandolins, as well as violins and cellos” (Wright). By 1926, the instruments of both master and his "best pupil" were featured side by side in a distributor's catalog (Valeriano Rovinazzi of Bologna). Mozzani appears to have been comfortable with this, and likely quite proud, as he apparently kept Maccaferri on in his own workshop until 1928 in a supervisory capacity in the bowed instrument department (Maccaferri was also a fine violin maker).

While the 1926 catalog shows only a drawing of the main new Maccaferri harp guitar (with descriptions of the others), Maccaferri's own c.1927 catalog contains valuable photos of these *four* new harp guitar models. (See the Appendix for full catalog pages.) Recently, surviving examples of two of the ultra-rare catalog styles have surfaced.

Besides the catalog models, there are additional photographs of Maccaferri (and one additional famous player) with other curious models. These show four *additional* Maccaferri harp guitar variants that differ slightly-to-significantly both from the early catalog models and the final Selmer models. All of these instruments appear to have been created in the short years between his 1923 shop opening and the 1931 start of the brief Selmer period. Amazingly, all this while, Maccaferri was periodically relocating (Cento, Paris and London), concertizing throughout Europe, and recording. *How could he have been* so *prolific*?!

It is our efforts to *sequentially date* these rare "interim" harp guitars that remains fascinating, if frustrating. Pictured below are all the different types of Maccaferri harp guitars that I am aware of. Most are one of a kind, and some are known only from a cryptic photograph. The lineup below shows all of them in order of *possible* chronology – but also in what I (personally) imagine as a reasonable "progression" from a design standpoint. The following chapters provide further details and conjecture on each instrument or "type." Caption dates come from various sources, and some may be approximations or errors. Many are dates attributed to the *photos* in which the harp guitars appear (if accurate, thus being the *latest* that the pictured instrument could have been built, with no clear idea as to how much *earlier*). For the sake of discussion, I have labelled these harp guitars “Type 1,” “Type 2,” etc., in order of presentation (which, again, may or may not reflect the true timeline).


c.1923
(Type 1)


Early 1920s
(Practice HG)


c.1923-1927
(Type 2a)


c.1923-1927
(Type 2b)


c.1923-1927
(Type 2c)


c.1923-1927
(Type 3)


Mid 1920s
(Type 4)


c.1928
(Type 5)

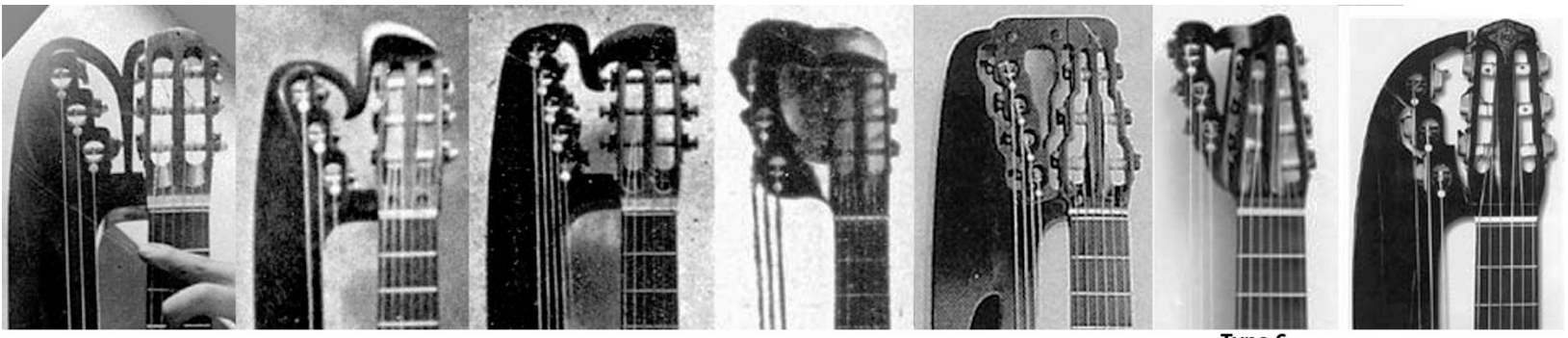

c.1932
(Type 6)


1932-1933
(Type 7)

The four undocumented instruments (Type 1, 4, 5 & 6) are the most intriguing, as there doesn't seem to be any definitive way to date them, or to deduce their order of appearance. I found myself being influenced by the shape of the soundholes and headstocks (which admittedly may or may not have anything to do with the actual sequence).

Headstock comparison of the above models

(**Type 4** not shown as headstock is out of frame)



Type 1 (9-string) | **Type 2a** (9-string) | **Type 2b** (11-string) | **Type 3** (9-string) | **Type 5** (10-string) | **Type 6** (Selmer 10-string 3+7) | **Type 7** (Selmer 9-string)

As you browse through all of Maccaferri's harp guitars, also keep an eye out for replaced bridges and/or saddles, which were nearly always originally configured with Maccaferri's three individual slanted saddles – a feature he borrowed from Mozzani. I once thought the configuration and count of frets might be a timeline/evolution clue. I no longer think so – though the fret configuration remains interesting – and so include this chart before we begin our look at the models or "types" (Photo credits are at end):

Harp Guitar Type	Total Frets	Last Full Fret	Comments
1 (Maccaferri's)	24	20	It would have been natural for Maccaferri to adopt the common 24-fret feature of Mozzani's typical harp guitars. He was building and playing them even as he created his first personal designs.
1 (Extant)	20 (modified)	20	The top and soundhole photos show the extension removed – cut off at the 20th fret, leaving a gap in the soundhole wood.
Practice HG	24	24	The only full-width (across all strings) 24-fret Maccaferri.
2a (all)	20	20	Perhaps Maccaferri chose to use only 20 frets for all his catalog "production" instruments for a perceived target audience?
2b (all)	20	20	
3	20		
4	24	22	Though there are the same 24 frets for the high strings, it's interesting that the last full fret appears at a different location in each of these three experimental harp guitars.
5	24	21	
6	24	20	
7 (Maccaferri's)	21	20	Presumably had no original extension.
7 (#275)	21	20	Original extension broken off?
7 (all others)	24	20	

The Models (“Types”)

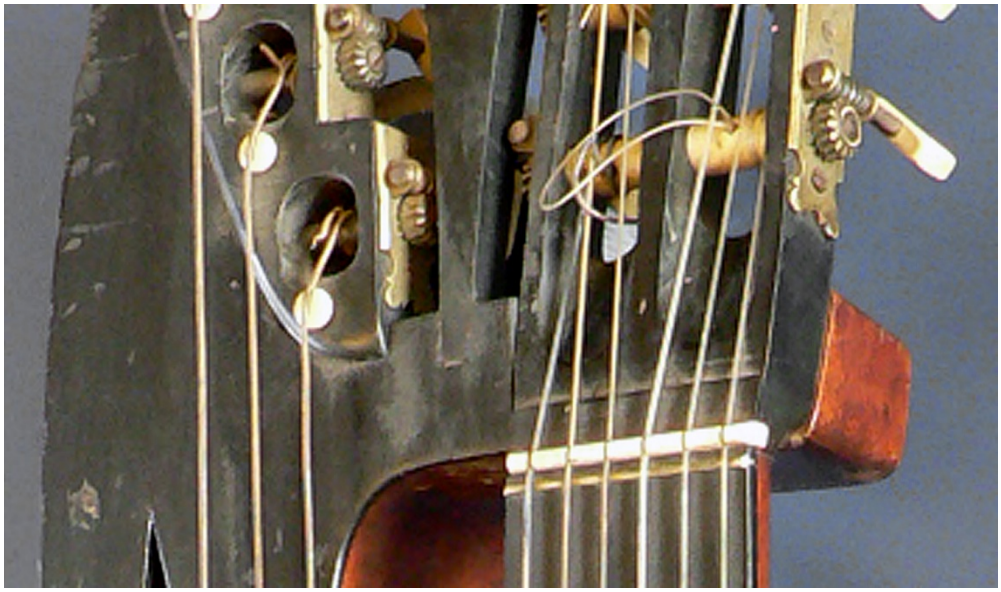
Harp Guitar Type 1

This ultra-rare specimen turned up in 2012 and matches a model played by Maccaferri in a similarly rare photograph. It is very similar to the next type shown (the production model), but has a host of subtle to significant differences. While the production model is now known to have appeared in 1923, with continual catalog offerings for a few years, this instrument – so far, the only surviving one of its kind – is stamped but undated, with clues that point to both earlier and later than the 1923 eventual production model. The shape of the hollow arm and classic, ahead-of-its-time cutaway body are virtually identical to the Type 2 production instrument.

The instrument was first observed in this wonderful photo of Maccaferri, demonstrating his impressive reach (many guitarists pose like this, and Maccaferri was a real showoff about it). The photo is undated, but Maccaferri looks closer to thirty than his early twenties (born in 1900, Maccaferri's age goes hand in hand with the year). Yet I'm proposing that he built it just prior to his 1923 instruments. If so, then the image simply means he hung onto the guitar and chose to be photographed with it some years later. On the other hand, the photo could be the strongest evidence of a much later build date.

The two instruments are virtually identical, but appear to be different examples of this model, as clear differences can be observed in the subtle shape of the decorative head connecting pieces when examined above side by side. To me, this feature is the best case for weighing this as Maccaferri's first experimental harp guitar. Considering the simplicity and fragility of the joining piece, it is in great shape. But why is it there at all? It seems to serve no structural purpose whatsoever, and – like his later Selmer – the upper tip of the "joining illusion" does not even connect with the main headstock! Note below how the decorative silhouette piece (damaged on the left) scarfs into the arm but doesn't touch the head, maintaining a perfect, if fragile, illusion. As in all of his harp guitars, the area containing the sub-bass tuners and "button nuts" appears to be a separately inserted piece.

I don’t see any hidden screws that might allow for neck adjustments at the horizontal neck support of the arm.



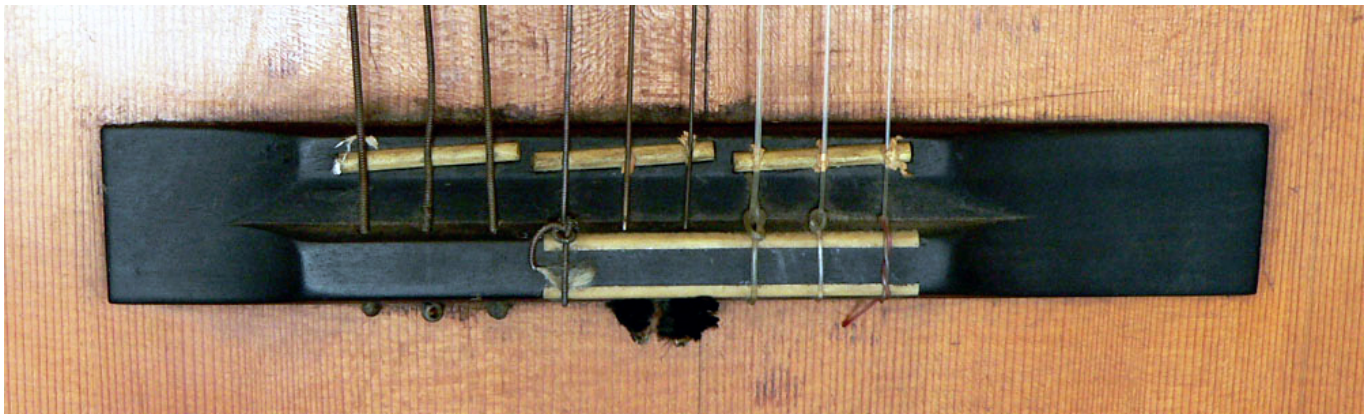
(Next page) The other end of the neck does have adjustment bolts like the Mozzani: three, for angle and twist. The somewhat crude cut-out for this system seems again to indicate an earlier experiment.

The back is heavily domed and is continuous to the very top of the bass tuner section, as are the sides.

Left: I believe this is the same instrument in a photo of Maccaferri demonstrating his technique (with metal thumbpick).

His instrument has an extension for 24 frets, which the extant specimen surely had as well. It has been cleanly chopped off below the 20th fret, leaving a gap in the soundhole.

Maccaferri's bridge appears a bit odd. Where is the classical-style tie rail that appears in the surviving specimen? The bridge of both instruments contains three separate bone saddles, a simple intonation-adjusting trick Maccaferri copied from Mozzani. The slant of the open sub-basses is of course irrelevant to pitch or tone. Whereas Mozzani used bridge pins for his harp guitars (with the gut and overspun string ends tied in a knot) – and Maccaferri would duplicate that on his 1923-c.1927 catalog guitars – he did not do that here, instead using a tie rail. This clue forces us to consider whether this instrument might have actually been built much later – *or* has a later replaced bridge.



Whether or not this instrument is the first harp guitar type Maccaferri built or not, it's interesting to note the soundhole on the harp arm – it's *very* Mozzani-inspired.

Mozzani also eventually switched to using a mahogany or stained wood for the front of his contrasting arm. But did he get that idea from his student? Maccaferri's may be an ebony veneer to match his other head components.

I don't recognize the tuners (I'm sure someone will), but they look like a purchased set of something easily available.

All in all, this instrument has the vibe of an earlier experiment to me.

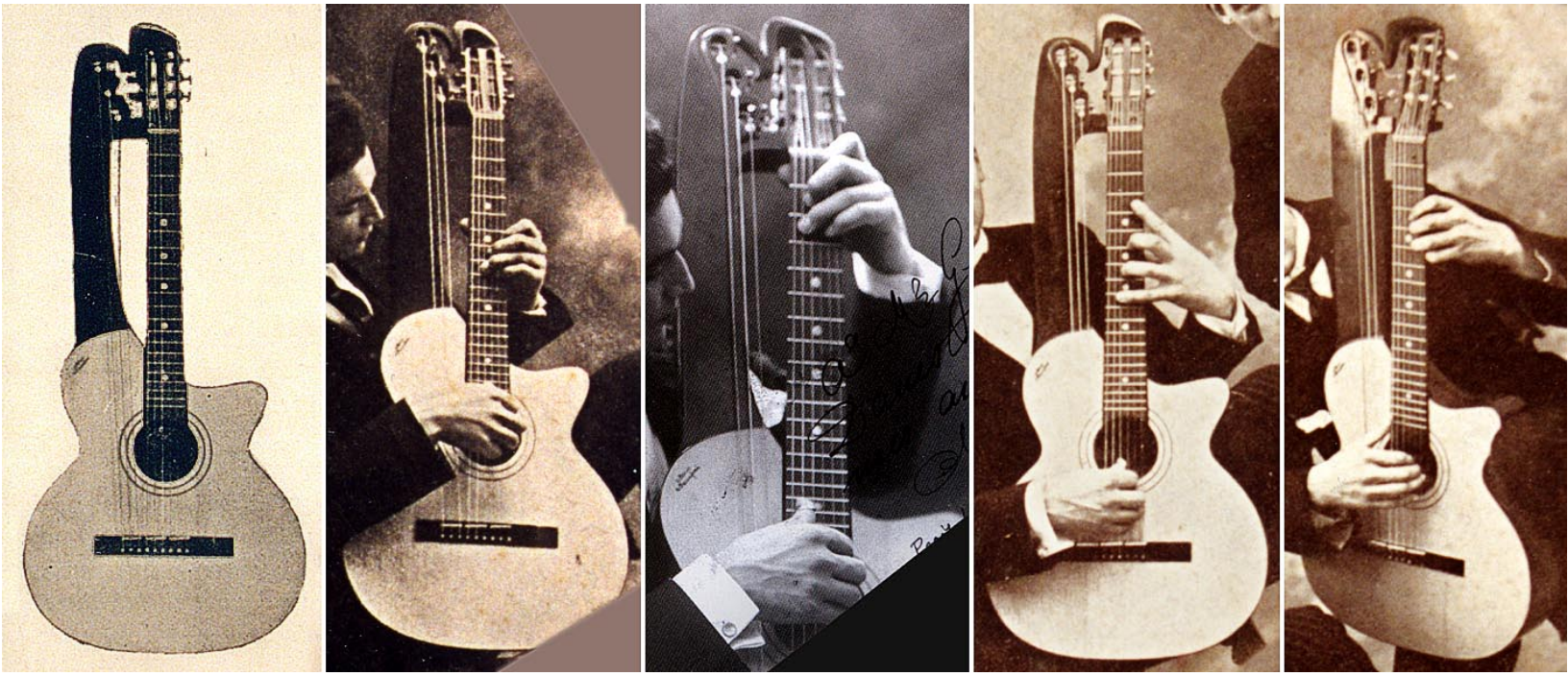
We'll soon compare this with the very similar catalog production instrument, where changes will include Maccaferri's stamp on the soundboard, the more elaborate carved headstock "sculpture," a cleaner system of hiding the adjustment bolts, the omission of the arm soundhole, limiting of the frets to 20, and bridge pins instead of the tie block seen here.

Practice Harp Guitar

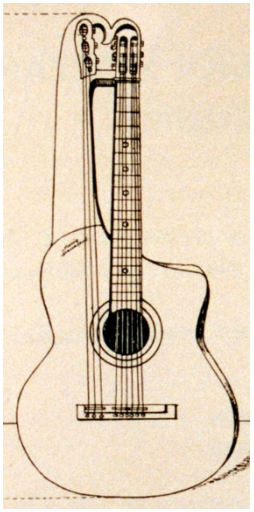
This stunning photograph from www.chitarrainitalia.it shows a young Maccaferri with an extremely cool, portable "practice harp guitar" with 3 sub-basses that he undoubtedly made for himself.

Note the add-on that gives the profile of the body for his right arm, while a support fits against his waist.

Harp Guitar Type 2a



5 views of Maccaferri harp guitar Type 2, 9-string version, taken from the three photographs below and the 1926 and c.1927 catalogs.



This Type – made in three configurations – represents to me Maccaferri's first *fully-realized* harp guitar design, and is by far my favorite. Appearing as an illustration (right) then photographed in the two extant catalogs, we only knew at first that it was a production model from at least 1926 through 1927.

One who knew it was actually introduced in 1923 was the late Alessandro Maccaferri, nephew of Mario Maccaferri, who owned the instrument shown here, kindly shared with me in 2017 (via mutual friend Giulio Sangirardi Bortolotti. It was Alessandro who published the Maccaferri booklet by Giovanni Intelisano, and Giulio who translated it with his lutherie partner Giulia Cavicchi).

MUSIKALIENHANDLUNG

FIRMA: VALERIANO ROVINAZZI
GEGRÜNDET IM JAHRE 1848

BOLOGNA
VIA ZAMBONI, 7 A. B. C.
(BEI ZWEI GROSSE TURM IM DER NÄHE)

Prof. LUIGI MOZZANI
der Erfinder die Guitarre lira und Emilianische Mandolinen (tipus) denn sehr Bekannt im Deutschland ist, als prima Guitarre virtuose.

INHABER:
Cav. PIETRO MARANESI

KATALOG
UND
PREISLISTE

GUITARRE - MANDOLINEN ORIGINAL MOZZANI (tipus) UND SOWIE MACCAFERRI MARIO AUS CENTO - BALBONI, FERRARA - DALL'OSSO, BOLOGNA - BESTEN SCHULER-MOZZANI

JAHRE 1926

MACCAFERRI MARIO
besten schüler von Luigi Mozzani - Cento

CATALOGO

Prof. MARIO MACCAFERRI - CENTO ITALIA

CHITARRE — MANDOLINI — MANDOLE — VIOLINI — VIOLE — VIOLONCELLI

I. Esposizione Internazionale Roma 1926
GRAN PREMIO e MADAGLIA D'ORO

III. Esposizione Internazionale Montecatini 1926
CROCE AL MERITO e MEDAGLIA D'ORO

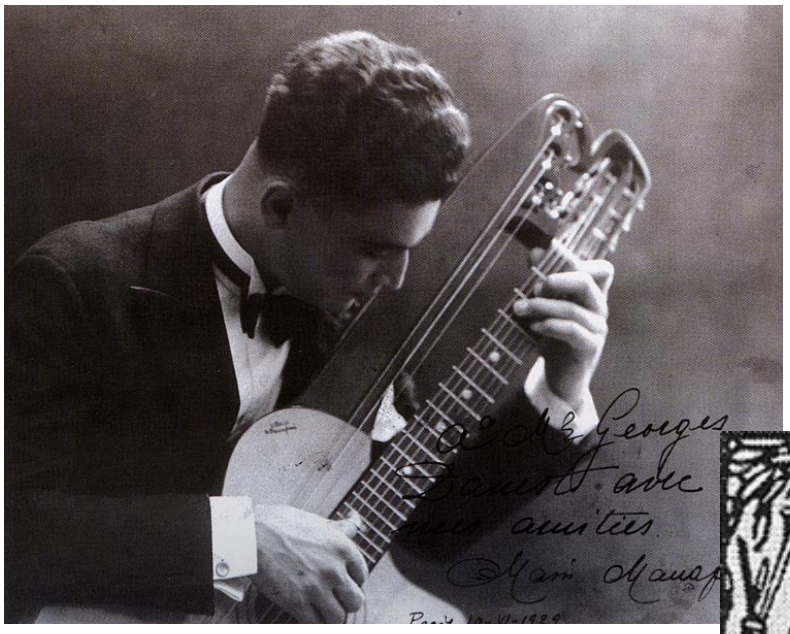
Concorso Nazionale di Liuteria, indetto dalla R. Filarmonica Romana 1927
2. PREMIO e MENZIONE ONOREVOLE

Previous page: The 1926 Rovinazzi catalog and Maccaferri's c.1927 catalog use the same image of Professor Mario Maccaferri playing his 9-string production model.

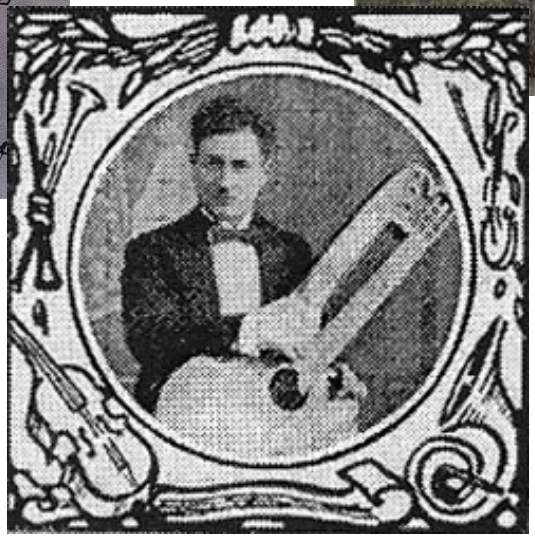
Additional photographs of Maccaferri with this same model. The second player on the right was listed as "Mateuzzei," one of his pupils.

The lower left photo was inscribed in 1929, but the instrument could have been built as early as 1923.

The lower right image is from Maccaferri's entry in the 1929 Columbia Records catalog. While clearly a similar 9-string, note that it has no signature in the top.

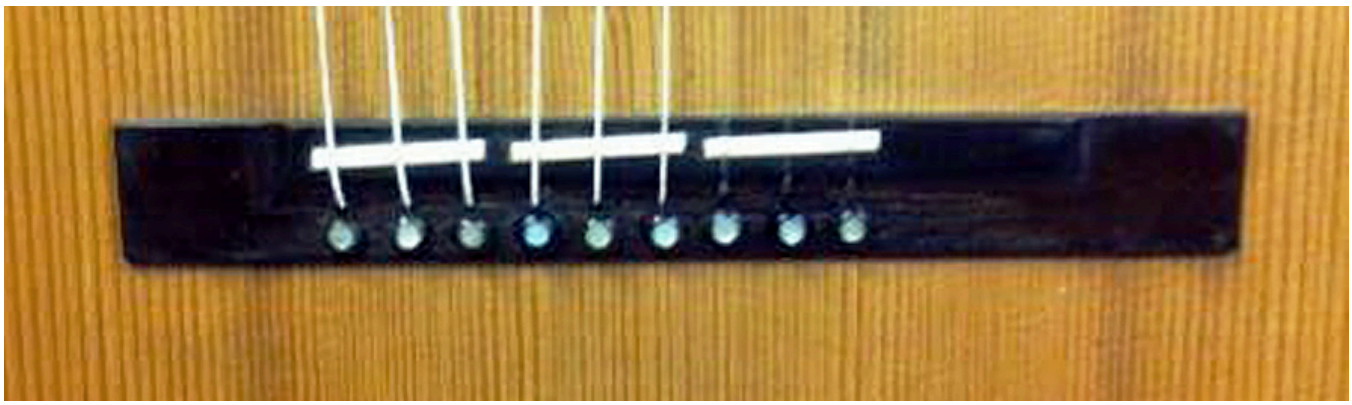


Below: Italian guitarist Federico Galimberti played both a dual-arm Mozzani harp guitar and this Maccaferri Type 2a, seen in a record catalog.



Note the inset screws attaching the neck to the arm's extension. These presumably allowed a small range of torqueing of the neck twist and were likely covered with black caps.

With Alessandro's surviving specimen, we can now fully appreciate the beautiful details of the three-dimensional bass extension, a gorgeous and wonderful, (and functionally, completely unnecessary) carved affair.

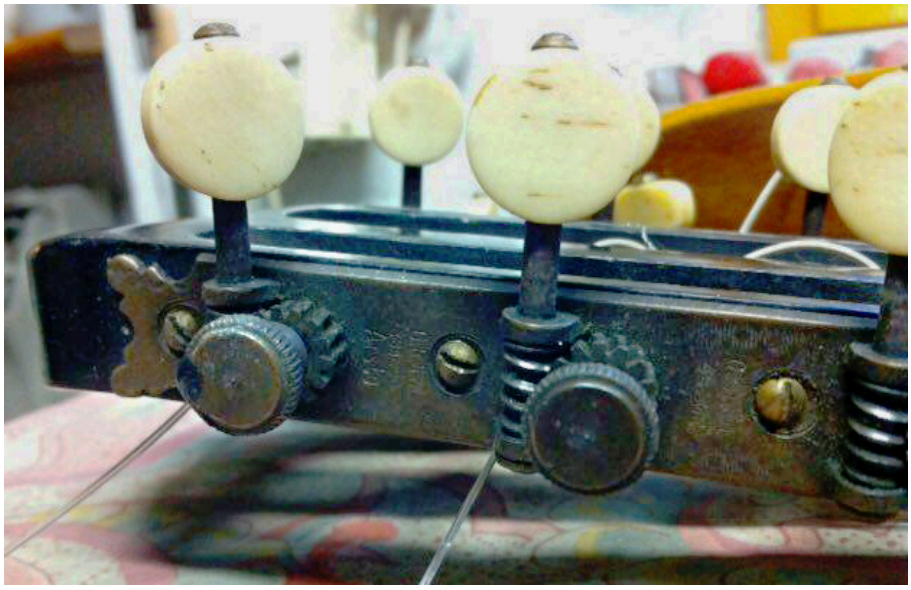


Again, we see the three separate bone saddles for intonation, but now Maccaferri uses bridge pics as his mentor Mozzani always did. Note how Maccaferri chose to center the bridge on the top with the neck, even though the nine strings are placed off center to the left.

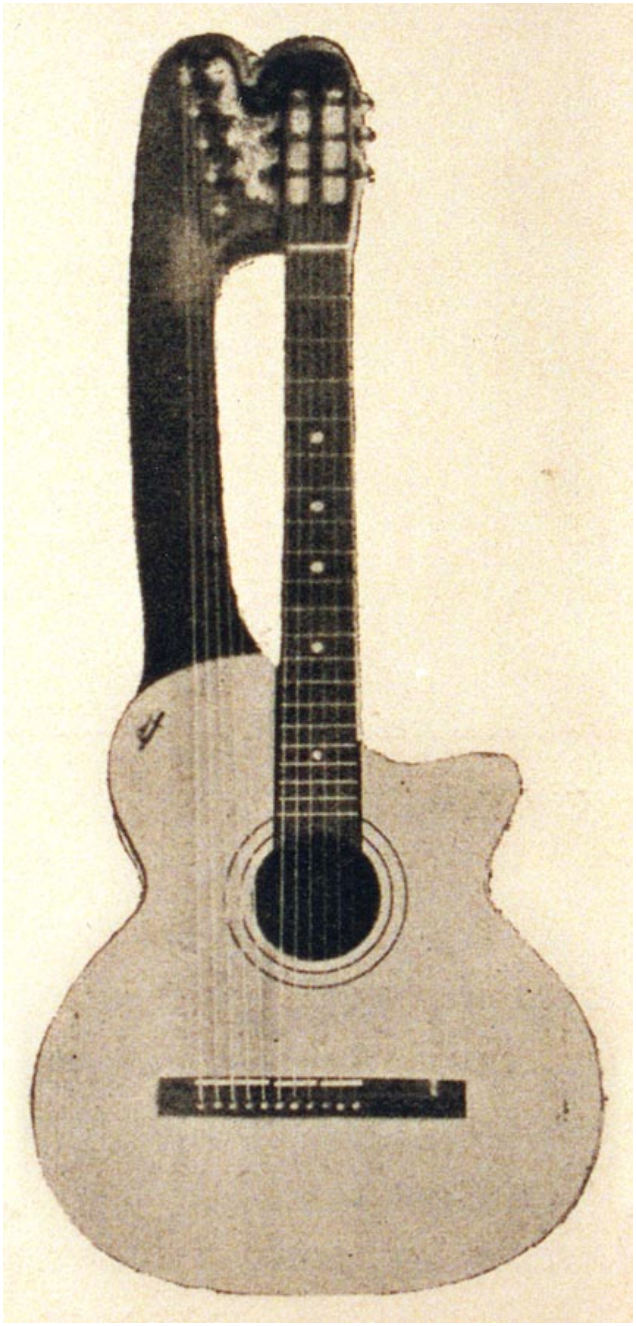
And now we see that there are no holes in the lovely back for neck adjustment bolts. Maccaferri chose to place them just above the 18th fret, and presumably, they are also adjustable. This 1923 instrument then uses a four-bolt neck system rather than Mozzani's six.

Note that the arm is much slenderer than the Type 1 above and has no soundhole, and that the instrument has 20 frets rather than his personal preference for 24 on a fretboard extension. All of these features – all but that elaborately carved headstock joint – indicate that Maccaferri may have been streamlining his just slightly for his prospective customers.

Similarly, his signature stamp on the top was meant for his customers, perhaps to clearly differentiate them from Mozzani's.

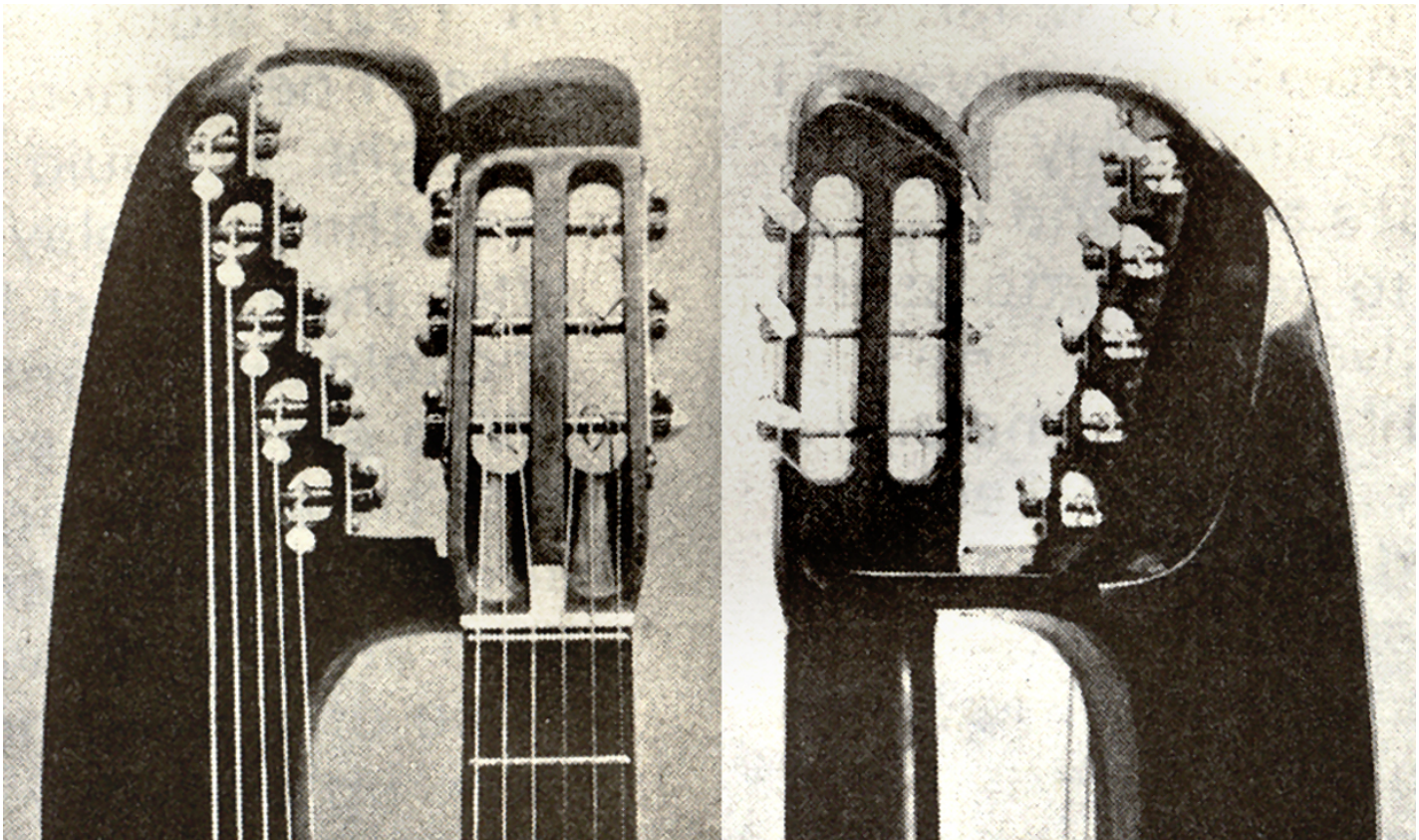


Harp Guitar Type 2b



The 11-string Type 2 harp guitar was described as being for accompaniment, as three or four floating basses was deemed the right amount by both Mozzani and Maccaferri. The first extant specimen appeared in 2008 in the updated Mozzani book by Intelisano and Frignani (the instrument belonging to Lorenzo Frignani). It also has a 1923 label with “year 1, n.6,” and, while nearly identical to the catalog specimen has a lower cutaway that hits the neck below the unmarked 17th fret rather than above it. You can make out the same two screws that attach to the neck block for adjustment. It also appears to have a more delicate head carving.

The tuning continues the 9-string's descending D-C-B with A and G (written as GABCD / EADGBE left-to-right or low-to-high). The extra two strings necessitate a lengthier bass headstock, while retaining a similar three-dimensional carved joining piece. I just love how Maccaferri curved the flare to the *left* on the 9-string and to the *right* on the 11-string. The rare Type 2b photograph below is also *just* curving to the right, but note its *extremely* delicate carving (along with overall different arm/bass head shape)! This image is from the 1979 Clinton magazine interview with photographs undoubtedly supplied by Maccaferri himself. If the instrument above was built in 1923, when was the one *below* built?! And where is this specimen now?

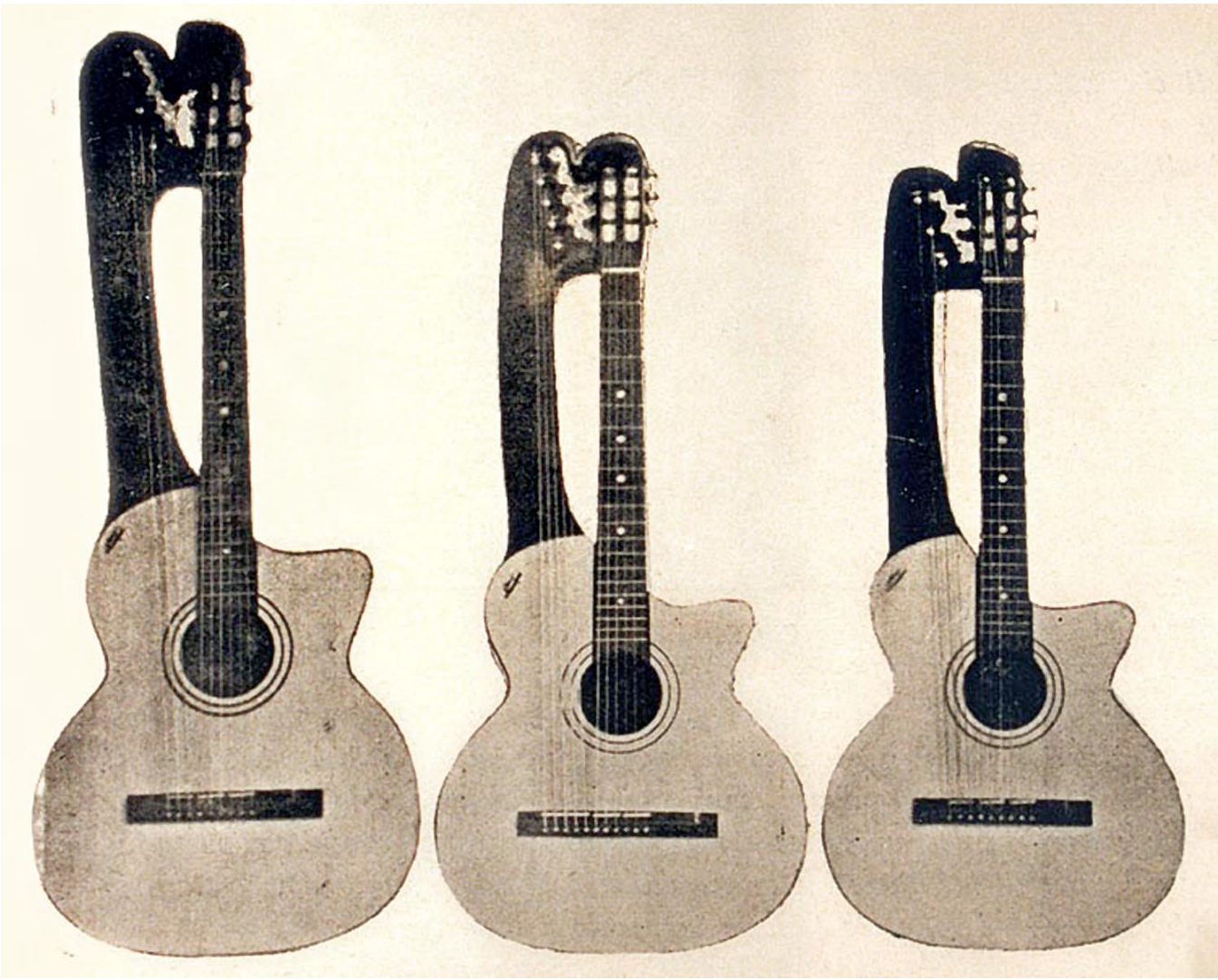


There are now *three* surviving examples of the Type 2b now known. Two (both owned by Lorenzo Frignani) are shown here side-by-side. The second looks identical, with the same lower cutaway and missing 17th dot marker, but is missing the stamp on the top and has no label. The backs are subtly different with beautiful woods. The third specimen is owned by Giovanni Intelisano.

Harp Guitar Type 2c

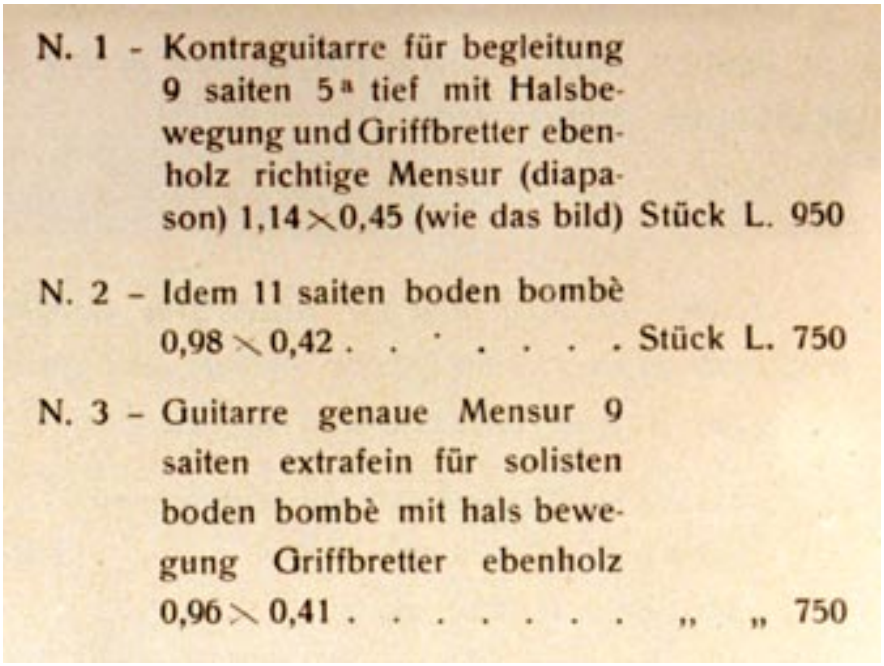
This fascinating 11-string instrument looks identical to the "standard" model above - until it is seen in perspective (below), which shows that it is a giant-sized version! Maccaferri dubs it a "chitarrone" (not to be confused with the much earlier lute of the same name), but it is really a 9-course *quinta bassa*. This quint-bass is tuned to the same relative intervals as the standard 9-string harp guitar, except that everything is tuned down a *fifth*. This yields a high string of A, and a lowest sub-bass pitch of E, an octave below a standard guitar's low string! The very few other quint bass harp guitars known have just one floating string (see Heinrich Albert & the World's First Harp Guitar Quartet). What a truly awe-inspiring instrument this must have been!

Here are the three "Type 2" models shown to scale as presented in Maccaferri's own catalog: Quint-bass, 11-course, 9-course. The scale length appears to be an inch or so longer on the 11-string, and a few inches longer on the quint.



Let's now turn to the two catalogs and examine the listings for these three models.

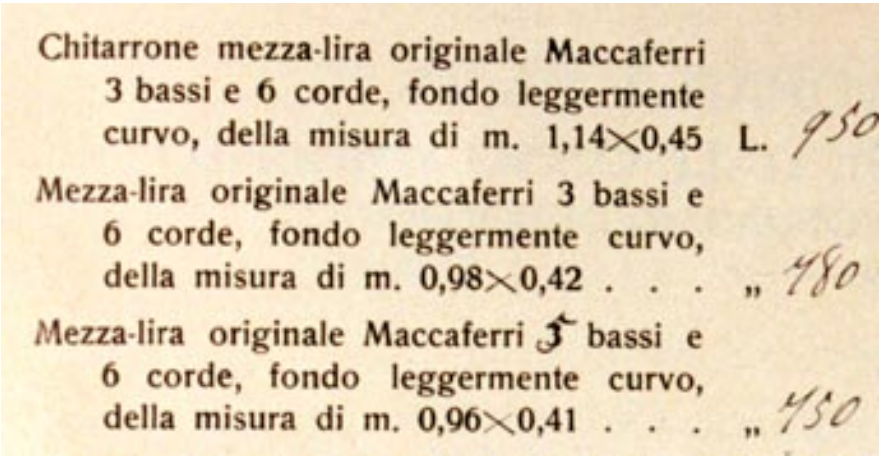
1926 Rovinazzi Catalog Entries



N. 1 - Kontraguitarre für begleitung 9 saiten 5ª tief mit Halsbewegung und Griffbretter ebenholz richtige Mensur (diapason) 1,14×0,45 (wie das bild) Stück L. 950

N. 2 – Idem 11 saiten boden bombè 0,98×0,42 . . . . . Stück L. 750

N. 3 – Guitarre genaue Mensur 9 saiten extrafein für solisten boden bombè mit hals bewegung Griffbretter ebenholz 0,96×0,41 . . . . . „ „ 750



Chitarrone mezza-lira originale Maccaferri 3 bassi e 6 corde, fondo leggermente curvo, della misura di m. 1,14×0,45 L. 950

Mezza-lira originale Maccaferri 3 bassi e 6 corde, fondo leggermente curvo, della misura di m. 0,98×0,42 . . . „ 480

Mezza-lira originale Maccaferri 5 bassi e 6 corde, fondo leggermente curvo, della misura di m. 0,96×0,41 . . . „ 450

The 1926 Rovinazzi catalog includes both German and Italian descriptions of the three instruments, though they take some deciphering. Original prices are given in lira ("L").

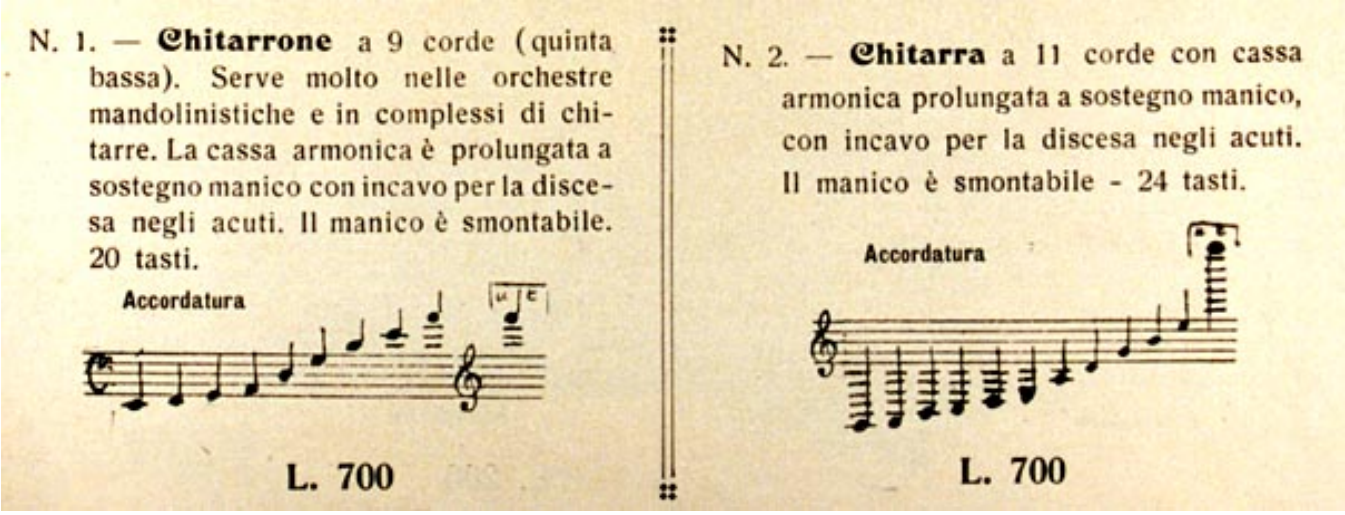
N. 1 is the quint-bass; a "contra-guitar for accompaniment" is how they chose to translate "Chitarrone mezza-lira" into German. Incidentally, the term *"mezza-lira"* – meaning "half-lyre" – was introduced by Mozzani for his single-arm harp guitar designs. (I've stated many times how I find calling it a "half-lyre" is an oxymoron, akin to calling myself a "two-legged quadruped.") This entry mentions the adjustable neck and ebony fingerboard, while the Italian entry lists a "carved bottom" (convex back). The overall dimensions are 1.14 m (44.9") tall and .45 m (17.7") wide.

N. 2 is the 11-string (5 sub-basses), which measures .98 x .42 m (38.6" x 16.5").

N. 3 is the 9-string "for the soloist," measuring .96 x .41 m (37.8" x 16.1").

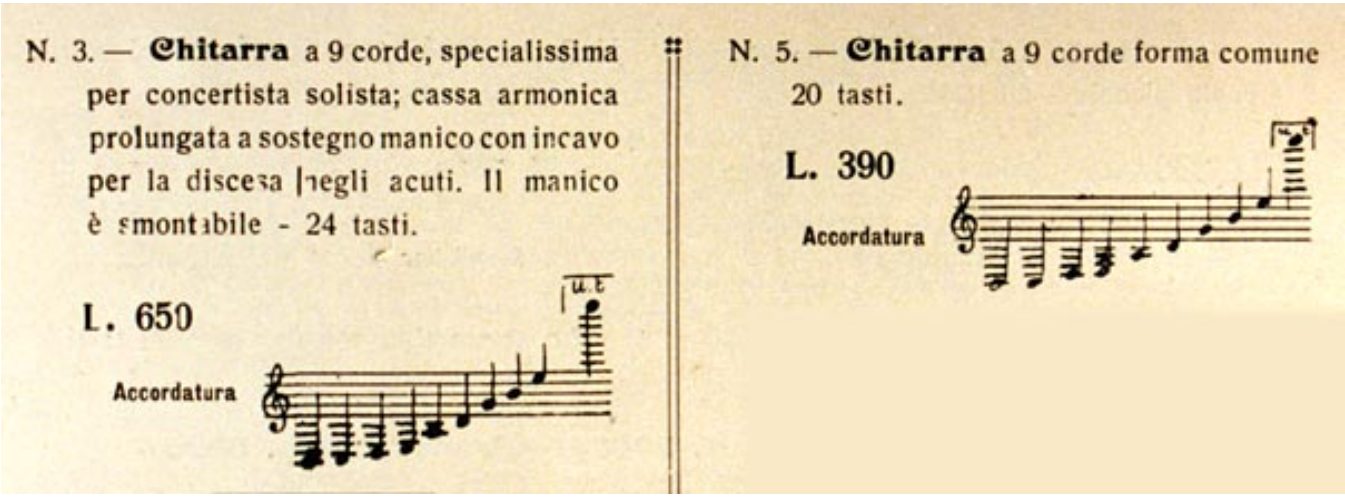
The Italian entry mixes up the last two – the handwritten "5" should have been done on the above entry – the larger instrument selling for an extra 30 lira.

c. 1927 Maccaferri Catalog Entries



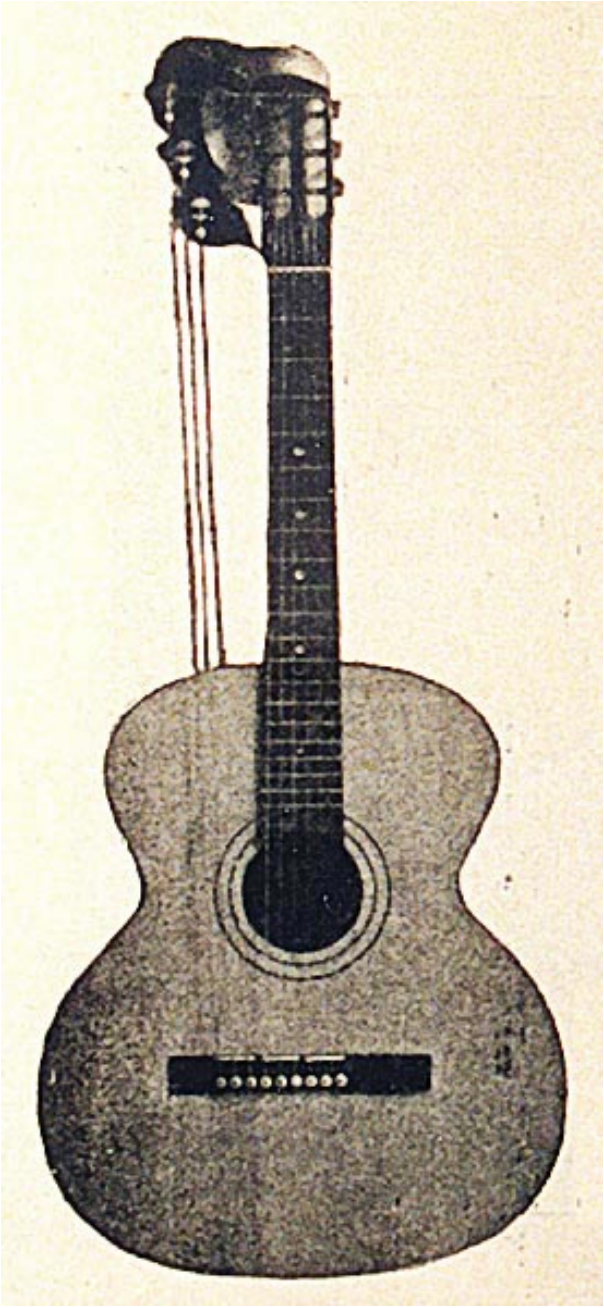
N. 1: Maccaferri's own catalog again uses the name "Chitarrone" and identifies it as a "quinta bassa." He also supplies the tuning: the neck is tuned a fifth below standard (lowest string is A), with the 3 sub-basses descending G-F-E.

N. 2 and N. 3 are the hollow arm 11- and 9-string harp guitars. It is interesting that although they are listed as having 24 frets – with the corresponding high E notated on the staff – the actual specimens shown in the catalog only have 20 frets. So do the extant instruments and the specimens seen in the photos of Maccaferri. It seems strange that he had been playing his mentor Mozzani's instruments with 24 frets, yet did not incorporate this feature for his own first instruments – despite the claims in his own catalog!



N. 5, a "common form" 9-string that sold for considerably less, is clearly the theorboed model shown next (Type 3).

Harp Guitar Type 3



Nothing is known of the 9-course theorbo-style Maccaferri harp guitar, except for this single image in the c.1927 catalog.

It has the same 20 frets (or is there an extra one?) and is distinctive in that it is the only Maccaferri harp guitar known without a cutaway!

The unsupported, carved extension was undoubtedly wonderful looking, if similarly fragile!

Harp Guitar Type 4

As discussed in my 2007 Harp Guitar of the Month, this one is a mystery! It is known only from these two cryptic photos of a young Julian Bream taken in 1947. Agonizingly, in *neither* photo do we get enough details. François Charle agrees that this was made sometime between Maccaferri's Mozzani period and his Selmer period – beyond that we have no idea. It was obtained from Selmer's London office as allegedly "Maccaferri's personal performance instrument" (aren't they all?). It is now known to have had "two soundboards, a tone reflector," and a "beautifully carved back." This puts in the same period and category as our next type – pre-Selmer harp guitars when Maccaferri had begun experimenting with resonator baffles, extra soundboards and more. Of special note with this type is the large oval soundhole. Also note that from here on out Maccaferri has switched back to standard classical guitar tie bridges.

I highly recommend reading my separate article, and then the entire fascinating story of Bream's history with this instrument – specifically the feud between his father and a very vocal member of London's Philharmonic Society of Guitarists – in Stuart Button's book *Julian Bream: The Foundations of a Musical Career.*

It still boggles my mind that a one-of-a-kind Maccaferri harp guitar once owned by Julian Bream has disappeared from the face of the earth!

Harp Guitar Type 5

Our next “interim” Maccaferri model is incredible (I own it, so should know), and once again, we can’t say exactly when it was built, A reasonable “c.1928” or c.1933 are both possibilities (see “Mystery Maccaferris” below).

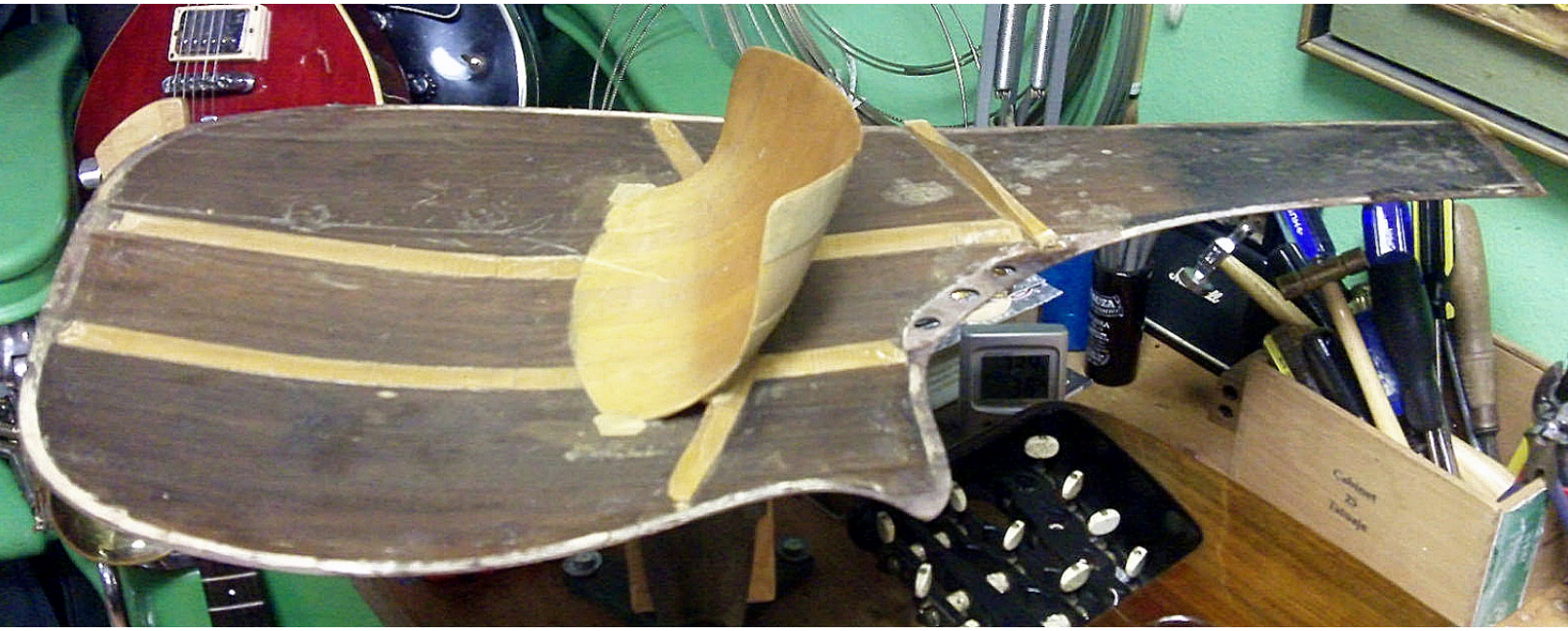
It is distinctive in every way – from its “squashed egg shape” (as luthier Fred Carlson described it), to the unusual upper treble bout cutaway, to the complex headstocks, to the rosewood back and sides (*two* sets – one outside, one *inside!*), to the *four*, rather than three, sub-bass strings, and to the Mozzani-style 6-point neck adjustment system. Not to mention what could very well be the first appearance of the famous “D” soundhole – through which can be seen the second, internal spruce soundboard and “floating” clamshell resonator.

If any historical instrument begged to be disassembled and analyzed, it is this one.

And so, we did!

The instrument had been originally restored by Marco Roccia (1902-1987). Now, in order to address a few new cracks inside, I gave the go ahead for my restorer, Bill Fiorella of Littleflower Guitarworks, to remove the back and have another go. I was anxious to study what was obviously an early experiment for the famous Selmer patented internal reflector.

Indeed, what we discovered was another guitar inside! It was just flipped upside down. Here you can see a second spruce soundboard that is attached to its *own* Brazilian rosewood sides. This inner soundbox is affixed to the outer soundboard, which acts at the "back" for the inner chamber. This inner body is separated from the outer body by a gap of a half inch or so around its perimeter and from the true back, which is hot bent, Mozzani-style, with a significant dome. The spruce half-clamshell "resonator" or "tone reflector" (really an air flow baffle) is glued to the back, positioned to protrude through the inner soundboard's cutout without touching it and stop just before touching the outer soundboard.



In the corner of the inner body's sidewall, there is a long narrow slot, providing a deliberate airway from this chamber to the arm cavity, which has its own front soundhole. Did Maccaferri imagine himself as some sort of mad scientist of airflow dynamics?!

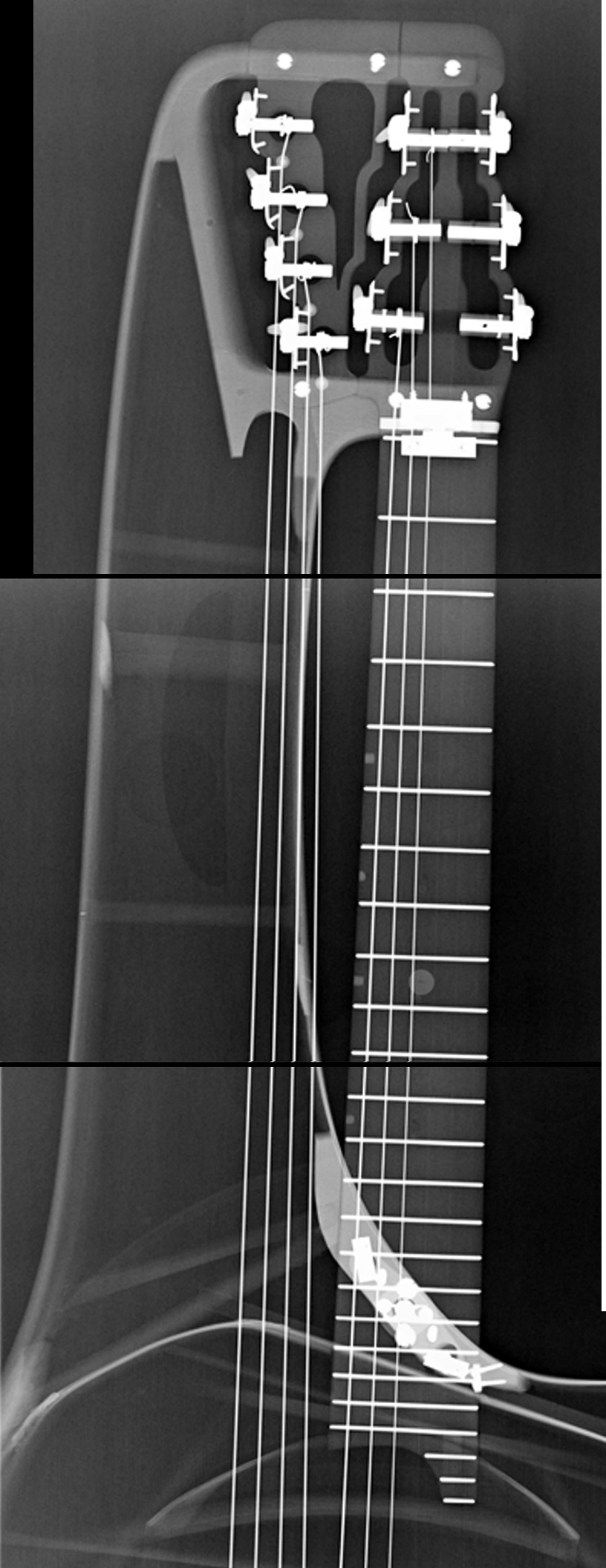
Sadly, the end result of all this time-consuming experimenting and logistics is that the instrument is no louder to the player or audience than any garden variety 6-string classical guitar.

Towards the bottom of this photo, you see part of the rosewood back remaining. Maccaferri did a straight seam here, perhaps because he didn't have a long enough piece. We can now see the inside of the painted arm, which looks like more Brazilian rosewood.

Note how in the previous photo that Maccaferri chose to stain the inside of the rosewood back black where it would be seen through the crescent soundhole. Rather than use the arm soundhole as a design element, as Mozzani famously did, his student must have liked the idea of hiding it with his black-on-black illusion.

The three holes in the thin neck block are for accessing the adjustment bolts for the neck. The neck itself is much like Mozzani's – wide, flat and thin, and amazingly comfortable to play.

Still curious about the design and construction of this instrument, I took it to our 9th Harp Guitar Gathering in Connecticut, where John Thomas set up another of his famous guitar X-ray sessions at his Quinnipiac University's Department of Diagnostic Imaging – this time for giant harp guitars!

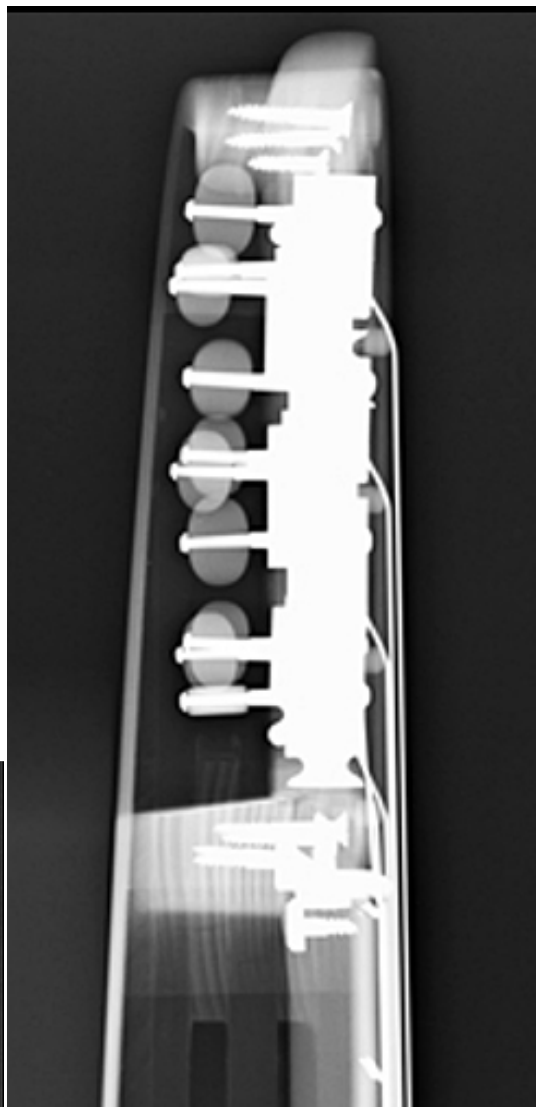


Remember: anything that appears white is metal, other wood elements are colored depending on their thickness.

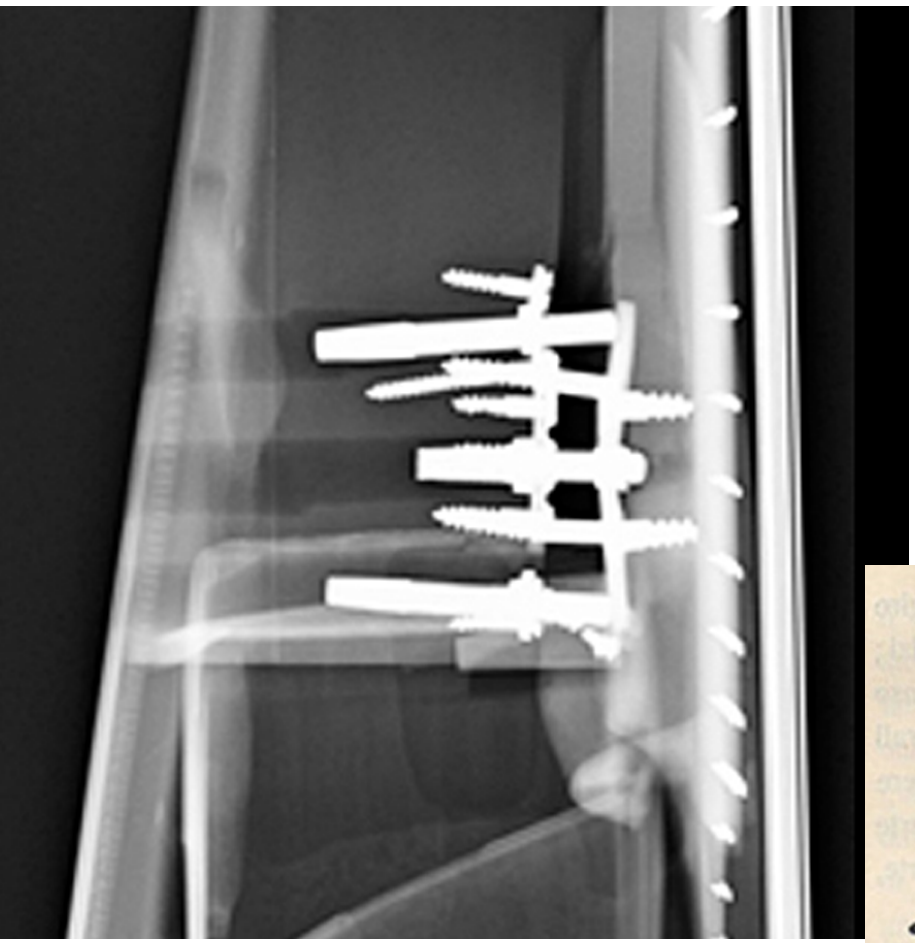
The six wood screws that are hidden under ebony buttons that attach the heads to the horizontal supports coming off the bass arm can be clearly seen. I believe the three screws that form a long vertical triangle on the 6-string head (which is separate from the bass head) act like Mozzani's 3-bolt system, where the top screw would adjust overall neck angle and the bottom two would adjust bass & treble twist.

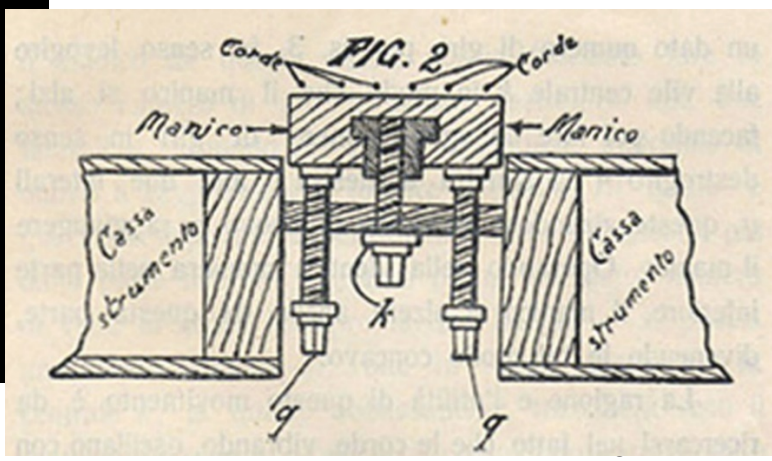
The additional plates around the bone nut remain a mystery, as do the two little screws pointed up.

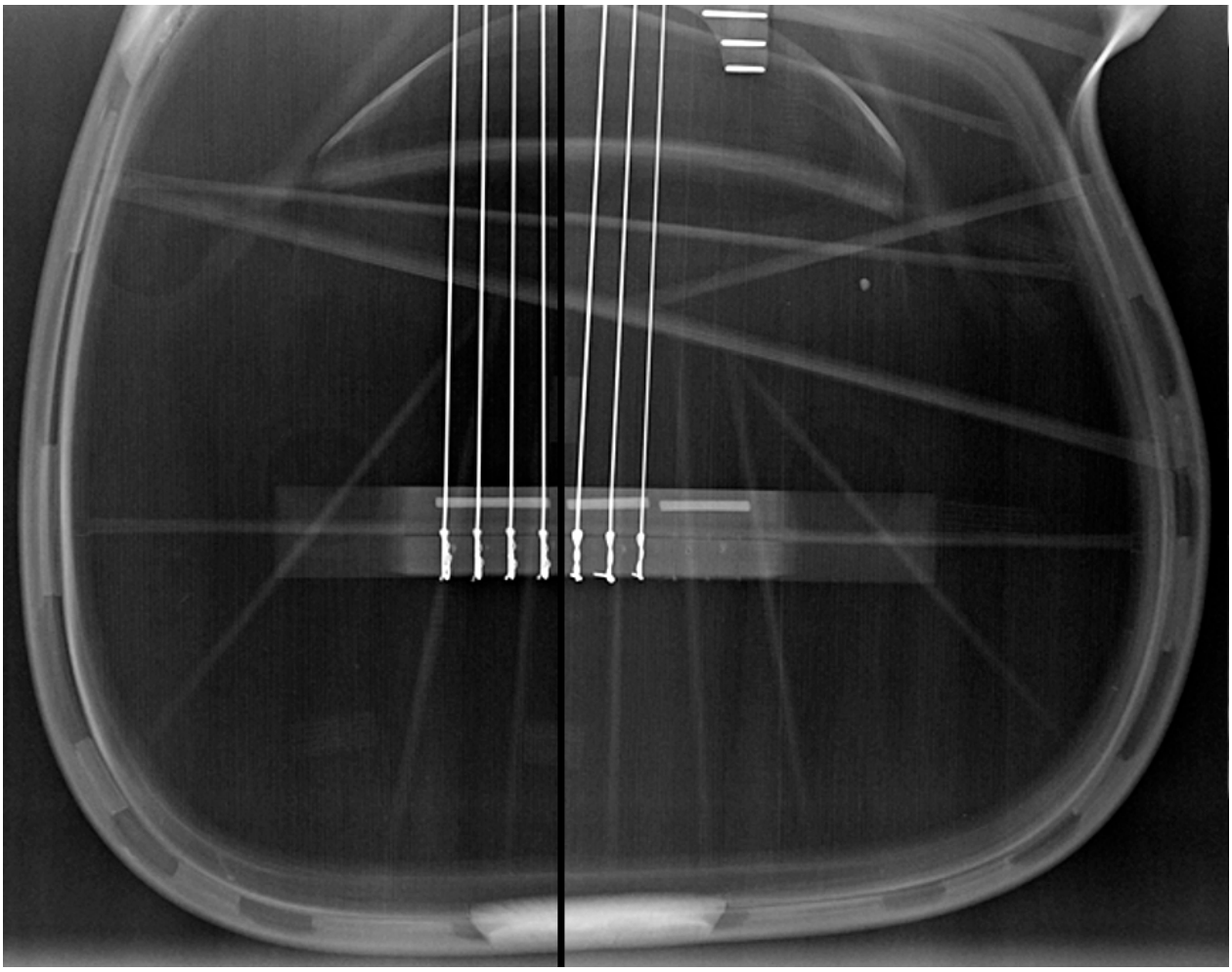
In the side view, an additional short screw is seen coming in from the back; I can't figure out its location or purpose either!



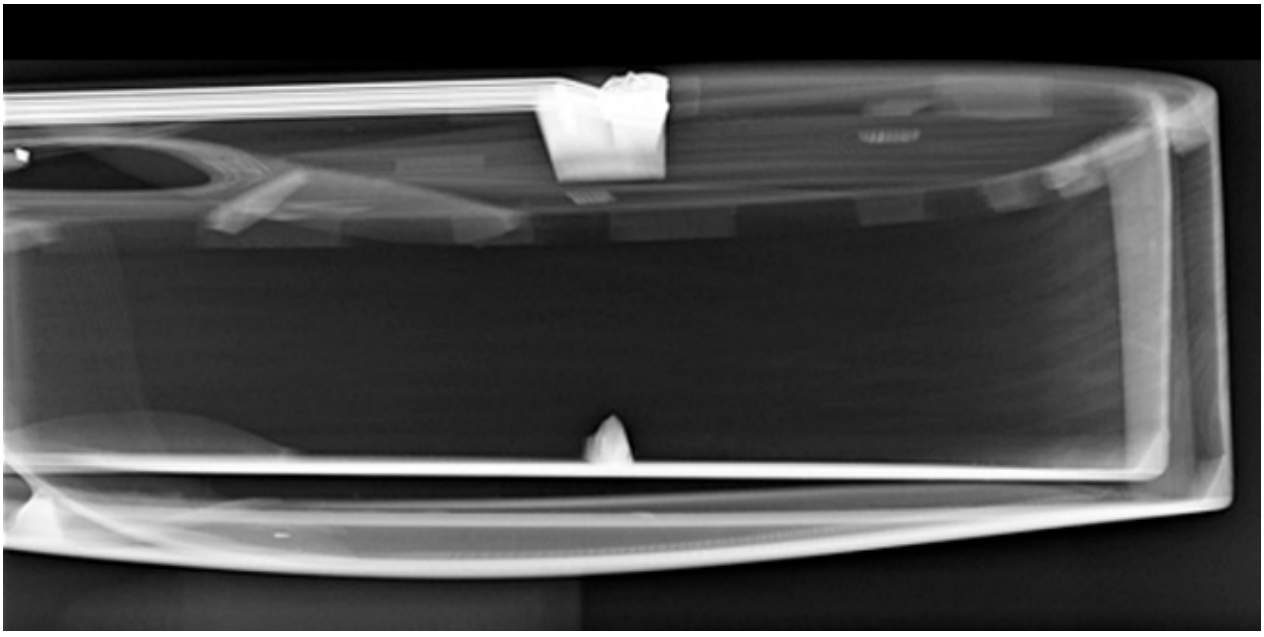
And then, there's this mess. Remember how the access holes are placed a near-45-degree angle, the side view shows the screws that must come from both directions to lock these down while allowing for neck movement through all three holes. Mozzani's system seen in the diagram from his harp guitar booklet seems cleaner, but Maccaferri may be using the same simple engineering.







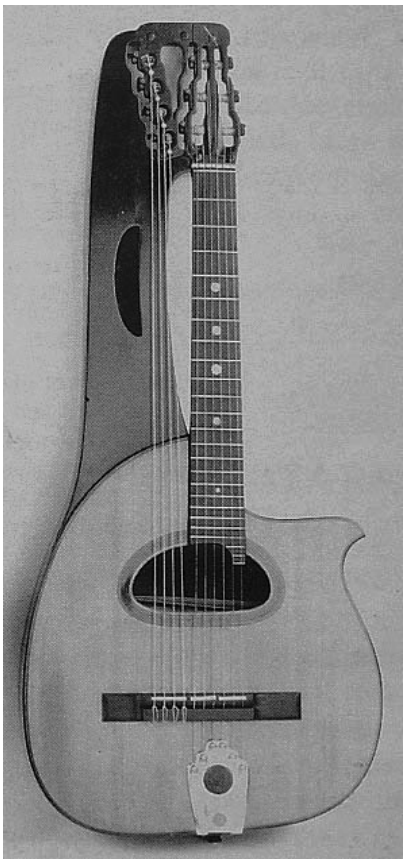
And finally, the body within the body…



Originally, the model was known from the Maccaferri photograph shown, which François Charle dates to the late 1920s (or could it be 1933? See “Mystery Maccaferris below). The extant specimen has a fascinating story, shared by James Westbrook, employed as a guitar expert by Bonhams at the time. It was one of three harp guitars owned by Maccaferri’s great friend, plectrum guitarist Louis Gallo, consigned to Bonhams of London in the late 1990s. The late collector Scott Chinery won the auction, but never collected his lots, and his instruments were then relisted in the following auction. This was then purchased by occasional guitar dealer Steve Stine who subsequently flipped it to California collector Jim Forderer. I eventually acquired it from Jim in 2010 (sadly, Jim passed away in 2016).

The photo below shows the instrument in the Bonhams catalog, complete with added inappropriate Selmer tailpiece. The next images show the instrument restored to its original configuration after the Bonhams auction. (This configuration will be discussed once more under Mystery Maccaferris…just in case we are all wrong!)

The Bonhams catalog stated that "*the vendor purchased this instrument from Maccaferri in New York, who told him it was made by Mozzani”(!)* Presumably the manufacture date of 1928 was provided by the consignor also – whether as true provenance, or a casual guess, we may never know. The first statement sounds reasonable, and added weight to the original assumption that it was the exact same instrument played by Maccaferri in the photo (discussed further below). All agree that the second claim is highly unlikely, and that it is, in fact, a pre-Selmer Maccaferri.



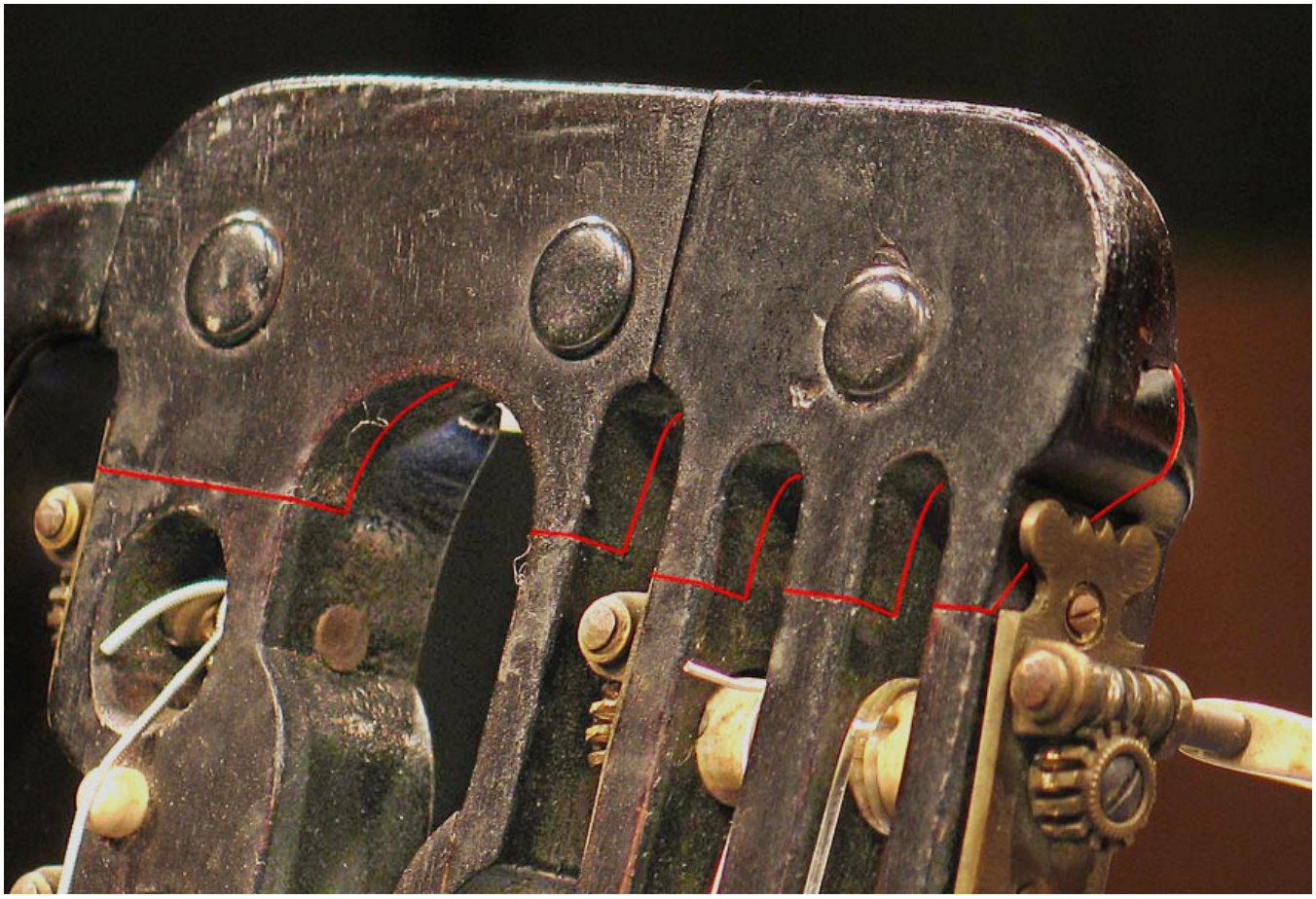
Nevertheless, I think it is worth paying closer attention to the alleged Mozzani provenance, especially as the consignor was quite likely familiar with its story from owner Louis Gallo. We all concur that it was made sometime in the late 1920s between Maccaferri’s Mozzani period and his Selmer period – but *when exactly*? While to my eye, it appears to be a later design, there is simply no way to know when and where it came from. Maccaferri set up his own shop in 1923 in Cento, home of Mozzani's workshop/school, and the assumption is that this shop was elsewhere in the small town of Cento (Maccaferri himself implied in 1986 that it was a totally separate “little shop” in Cento, “where Mozzani was also.” I wonder just how close it may have been (I still entertain thoughts about whether Maccaferri simply rented space in the extensive Mozzani school/ workshop building). It is also said that Maccaferri stayed on with Mozzani until 1928 in the bowed stringed department. So, why *couldn’t* Mozzani have been involved? If not building, then co-designing. If not designing, then coaching. As I question above, could Mozzani’s shop have been utilized? It would thus have been built “at” Mozzani’s – not that far off from the owner’s “made by Mozzani” statement made some seventy years later.

Originally, everyone assumed that there was just one of these guitars made, and that the extant specimen which surfaced in 1990 was, in fact, the very instrument Maccaferri is seen with in his late 1920s photo. In fact, I went so far as to duplicate as closely as I could Maccaferri's pose with it to compare (including my faux-Italian suit). Certainly, the instrument is very unusual and distinctive, another personal experiment of Maccaferri's. And yet there are obvious discrepancies between the two. But can we explain them away? Possibly. Let's take a look.

Let's start with the head. You can see that mine extends and contains the screw cover plugs. Maccaferri's runs straight across with nothing there – which is certainly possible, but not logical for him. I am now *considering* a scenario where a darkroom technician matted or brushed out that area that almost seems to fade away into nothing. Perhaps because there was some visual artifact in the background they needed to get rid of? Perhaps examining the original would yield a better answer; to me, it's not impossible.

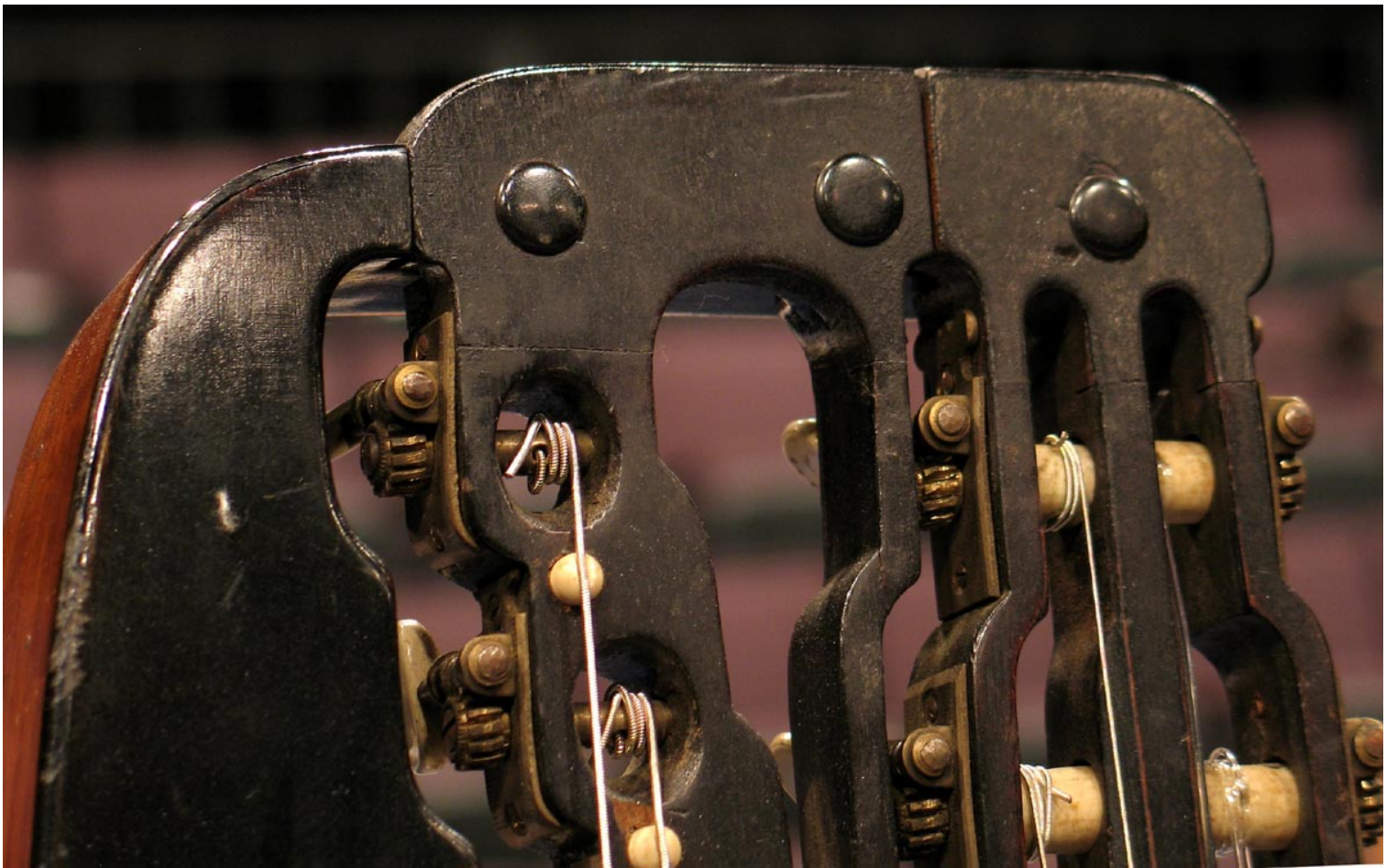
A second and better possibility for the head question is that mine shows signs of extensive rework; in any event, *something* strange has taken place. The X-rays can't help us here, so let's look at my photos, while considering these observations. (I literally couldn't see some of this in person, but had to carefully photograph, then magnify and apply various Photoshop filters to accentuate these features.)

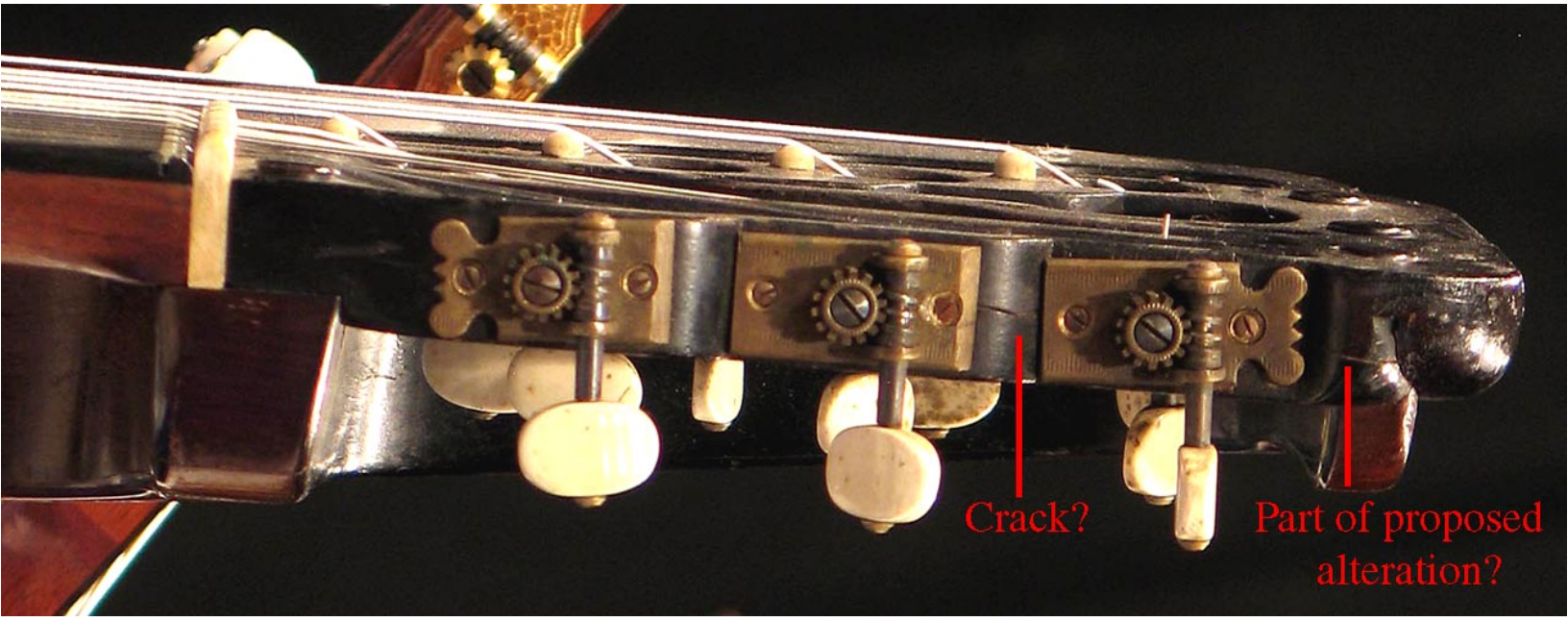
I conjecture that we are looking at a "period" modification of the original late-'twenties photographed instrument by Maccaferri himself – i.e.: soon after it was built, with the same wood, stain, materials, etc. I was told by John Monteleone that Maccaferri was known to be an excellent engineer, designer and machinist, and was thus able to create any required custom hardware for his inventions. Here, I think he may have decided to install (or *re-do*, if there originally *were* any) adjustment points to the headstock area. Or perhaps the area was damaged – there is at least one crack in the fragile lattice-like structure. I have drawn in red where I think the seam of a new, extended facing piece may have been inserted. It's not completely obvious as it was impossible in person to see the vertical seams in *any* lighting, and using the photos, blown up, contrasted and sharpened, one has to sort of imagine some of them. A few are obvious, and if these are *not* what I propose, then they make no sense whatsoever! Perhaps others are near invisible from the sanding and finishing and ultimate age of the piece – I cannot say.



The red lines represent my proposed seams of new scarfed-in overlays. Next is the same image shown without my lines and highly contrasted.

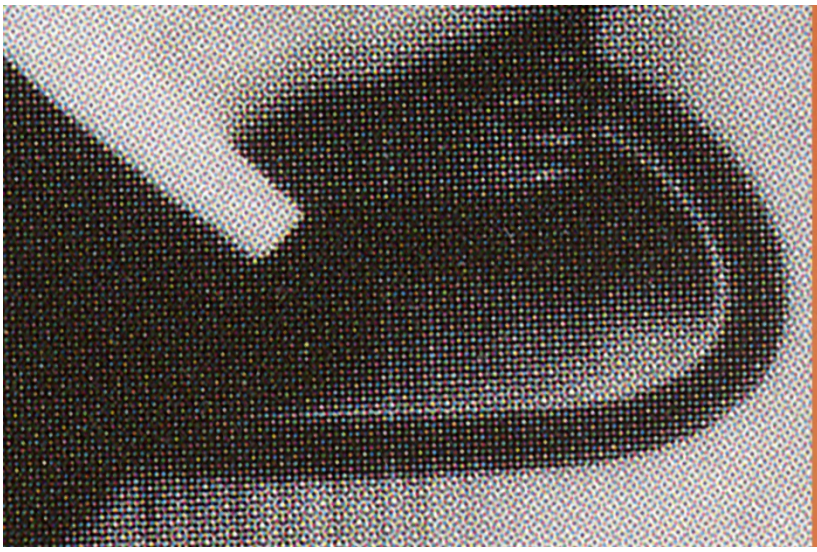
Other angles:




Crack?
Part of proposed alteration?

Are there any other discrepancies? Possibly. I chalk up the different “shape” of Maccaferri’s bridge to light glare on the right side, so discount that (and of course, bridges are easily replaced, but I don’t think this one was). The bottom bone “button nut” for the first sub-bass string does not appear to be in the same position (but again, could have been re-worked?). Finally, what we see through Maccaferri’s soundhole does not seem to emulate what mine has. Here’s how the clamshell protrudes through the wide, skinny D-shaped hole in the inner soundboard, seen from both sides:

You can see the two corners of the clamshell at these angles; the top edge of it is hidden above, behind the fretboard. What’s slightly confusing here is that Maccaferri has a very thin tall brace on the “audience side” of the inner soundboard, and it is angled rather than running along the edge of the inner D-hole. Thus, the view from straight on through the soundhole yields this below. True, Maccaferri’s instrument may be at a different angle, yet has a line though that inner shadow that is odd in any scenario. Votes?



Harp Guitar Type 6

A single photograph of this fascinating instrument was discovered in February, 2008 within the personal file cabinets of Mario Maccaferri. Special thanks to the Maccaferri family and researcher Jeremy Tubbs for sharing this important find with us.

There are several interesting features so it is hard to know where to begin! It appears to be a smaller body instrument with a more traditional classical-style shape and round soundhole, albeit with the Maccaferri cutaway. Note the strange protrusion on the cutaway – a subtle extension serving as a leg rest? The extra section attached to the upper bass bout and neck appears to be an additional small resonating chamber complete with a tiny sound hole! It has Maccaferri's preferred 24 frets for the high strings. The headstock affair is yet another hand-carved, hand-machined Maccaferri design. Most interesting is the stringing configuration of *seven* strings on the neck, with three sub-basses. This is an intriguing find that relates to the main topic I explore below in "Undiscovered Maccaferri Harp Guitars." Perhaps most curious of all is that this instrument bears a Selmer label inside! What could explain *that?* Was it a custom Selmer order, which Maccaferri uniquely accomplished? An un-produced Selmer prototype? Or yet another personal instrument that Maccaferri built for himself, with a Selmer label inside for some unknown reason (required by his contract?)?

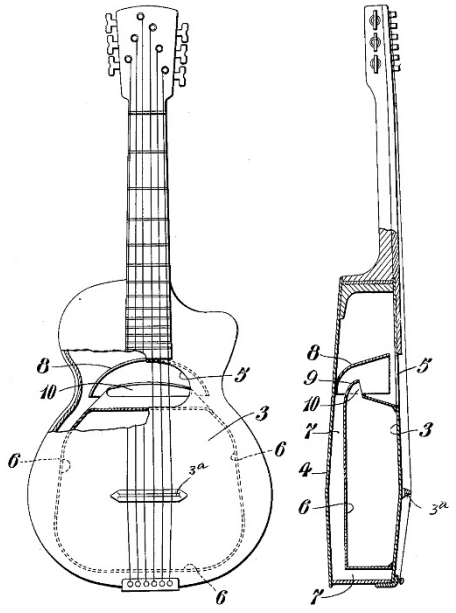
Dating this one is a little easier, as we can assume it was built within the 1932-1933 timeframe of Maccaferri's Selmer relationship.

Harp Guitar Type 7

We finally reach the last of our Maccaferri harp guitar types: the famed Selmer *Concert Harpe* model. The *"concert"* designation refers to it being a nylon string classical guitar. There are currently four known extant instruments out of at least five sequential serial numbers. I suspect all were originally identical production instruments. The Selmer harp guitar seen in photos of Maccaferri may represent an additional specimen – perhaps a prototype. *Or* is it #275 discussed below? It depends on what we can resolve from photos and the specimen.

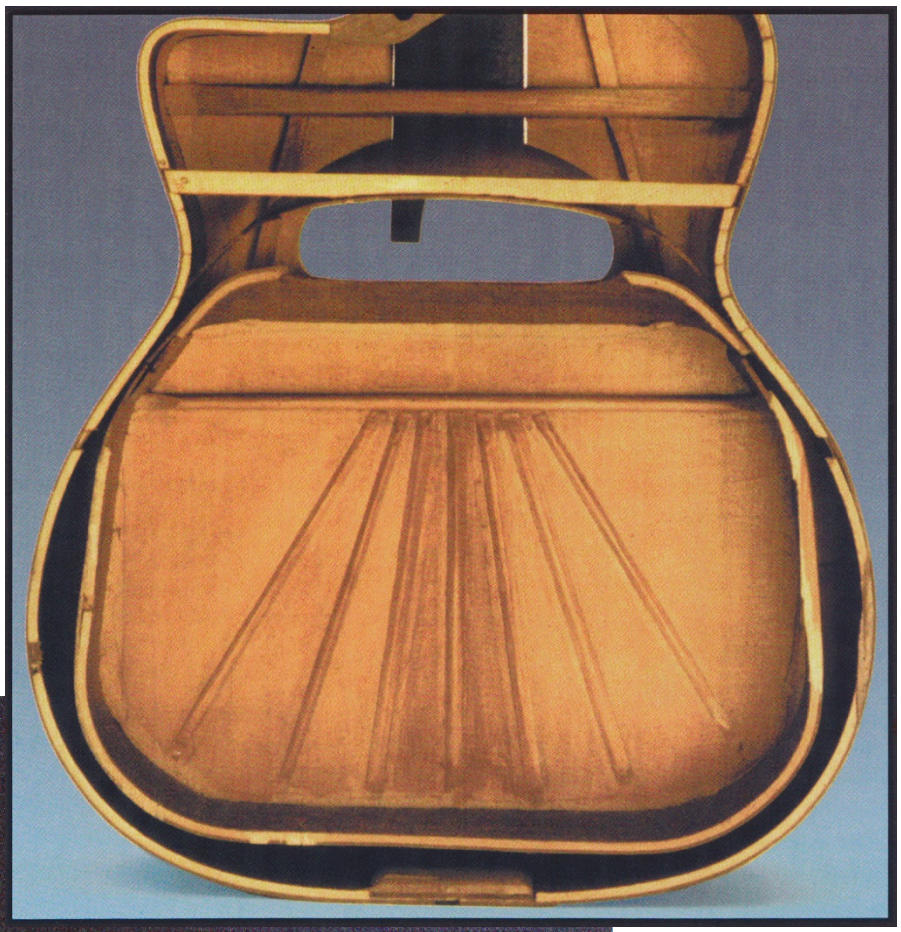
The Selmer harp guitars are well illustrated and described in Francois Charle's wonderful book. Key elements are the D-shaped soundhole and the internal resonating chamber – virtually the same idea (but a vast improvement on) the Type 5 experiment seen above.

Upon the start of his deal with Selmer in France, Maccaferri (then in London) decided to patent this latest version of his internal resonator. The English patent was filed on April 9, 1931 but not granted until July 11, 1932. This number – 373,333 – appears on the headstock of all four specimens. He later also filed in France and the U.S., the latter copying the illustration from the first patent:



The side view diagram is particularly illuminating, as it shows how the smaller inner soundbox – energized by the strings via the bridge – is tasked with producing essentially all the tone and volume, directing it out the large D-shaped soundhole. The air cavity behind it may contribute something, but as Maccaferri explained, the original purpose of this design was to isolate the guitar's "body" from the back, which is dampened by the player cradling it (others experimented with adding additional isolated "floating backs" for this same reason). The inner body is not as small as drawn with the dotted line; it actually fills the entire outer body, glued in tight with a couple of small blocks. The baffle similarly fills the entire width of the waist and is glued directly to the side walls. The exact same configuration is used for the harp guitars, as will be seen below.

These partial views of original and reproduction Selmers from Charle's book show the concept nicely:



Maccaferri's various fragile carved head designs were here simplified into one that was again intended to give the visual illusion of a continuous piece of architecture, but, as before, the head and neck float separately on the harp frame. The three sub-bass tuners are again contained within their own separate wooden insert. But there is still that *one* last fragile extension, just begging for breakage (which we will, in fact, see below…twice!).

Maccaferri continued his tradition of using a separate piece for the front (top) of the arm, now known on the Selmers to be a piece of solid ebony. For the Selmers, he chose to return to the dramatic Mozzani-like arm soundhole of his very first harp guitar model, though continued to visually hide it with his deliberate black-on-black effect. Indeed, in certain photos, it is almost impossible to make out! His bass headstock and tuner array is now much simpler, and is unconnected to the 6-string head.

Finally, he refined his body shape so that the cutaway, proportions, arm and head became streamlined and quite stylized, just as the Selmer jazz guitars would come to define *"modern."*

As a historian and scholar, I believe the provenance of rare and valuable instruments should always be archived whenever possible, and that includes ownership. Along with dated photos and other notes, one can often back-trace repairs, modifications and other features. Knowing of no requests for anonymity, here's what I know of the four extant Type 7 Maccaferri Selmer harp guitars:

Serial # 275 appeared in the same late 1990s Bonhams auction (catalog photo at right) as my Type 5 harp guitar, and was formerly owned by Maccaferri's friend Louis Gallo. As seen in the original listing, it had several top cracks, a broken head extension and missing fingerboard extension, leaving the 21st partial fret. Both broken areas appear to have already been smoothed off to appear "finished." Won, but unclaimed by Scott Chinery, it sold in the following Bonhams auction to the late legendary John Pearse. On the way home, hand-carried by his son, it was severely damaged by the airline, after which John subsequently repaired it. Rather than recreate the broken head piece or fretboard, he chose to leave it "as is." It was later sold to collector Jeff Doctorow, who eventually consigned or sold it to New York's Retrofret, where it is still available today. (Lark Street Music also had it and/or did more work on it somewhere in the latter period.)

#278 (right) similarly looks to be in fantastic condition, and was acquired also in 2008) by the Cite de la Musique museum in Paris, where it will presumably remain for future study.

Serial #276 has not yet been discovered, to my knowledge. #277 and #278 both famously appeared in the Charle book, with their ownership anonymous.

In 2008, #277 (left) changed hands through the Vichy auction, after being photographed by Sinier de Ridder. It looks to be all original and intact.

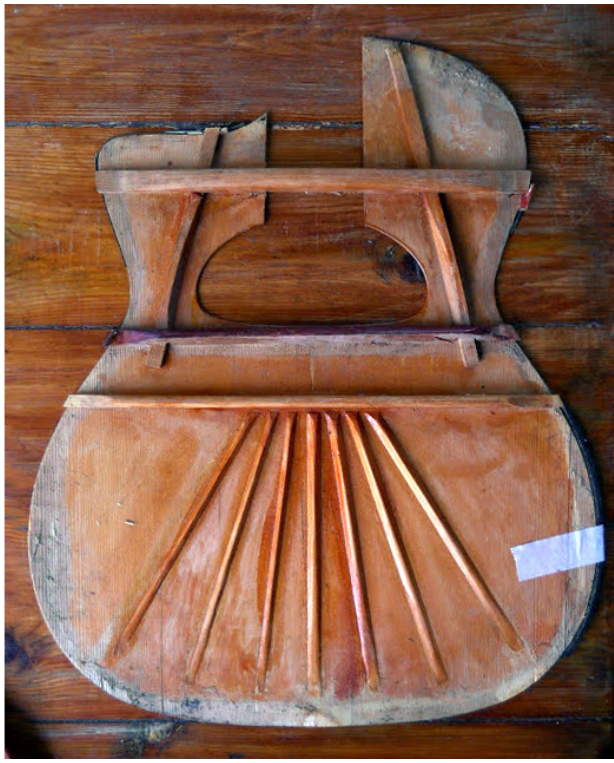
#279 came to my attention in 2013 and has an interesting story. Like virtually every surviving Maccaferri out there, it was said to be “Maccaferri’s personal guitar,” which we must always take with a grain of salt. Undeniably, it must have passed through his hands. As of this writing, this Selmer is for sale in Italy.

The story was culled from correspondence with the instrument’s owner (Reinaldo Franchiolo), the luthier who did the restoration (Lukas Milani), and a friend of the luthier (Massimo Milan, who took most of the images).

According to the owner, it was “given as a gift” by Mario Maccaferri to his friend, the world-renowned pastry chef P. J. Franchiolo, in 1939 while both men were living in Paris – just before escaping as the German troops were arriving. Franchiolo’s son Reinaldo eventually inherited the instrument upon discovering it in an old garage. He decided to have Vicenza, Italy luthier Lukas Milani restore it, Lukas spending five months on the project, explaining how he used a strictly philological restoring process using hide glue and nitrocellulose French polish. Following are some of the photos taken by both Milan and Milani as the restoration was underway.

Like #275, the tip of the bass headstock was broken off; at right is Milani’s restored piece.

While many have seen the insides of Selmer 6-string guitars, here's a look at the harp guitar's specific construction features:



The inside of the arm box shows the solid ebony piece used for the front (soundboard) side.

Above: The curious inner workings of the head-to-harp frame attachment that allowed for adjustment.

Above: It's also difficult to tell here how the neck is adjusted through the three holes in the back (seen earlier). The seating area of the neck was not photographed. But here you can see the thin, purple-stained reflector baffle glued to the sides.

Below: A matching-stain flat piece holding the large label is glued to the inner soundboard, to mate against the curved baffle and show through the D-hole.

More before, during and after images of the restoration taken by Lukas Milani can be seen on his YouTube video.

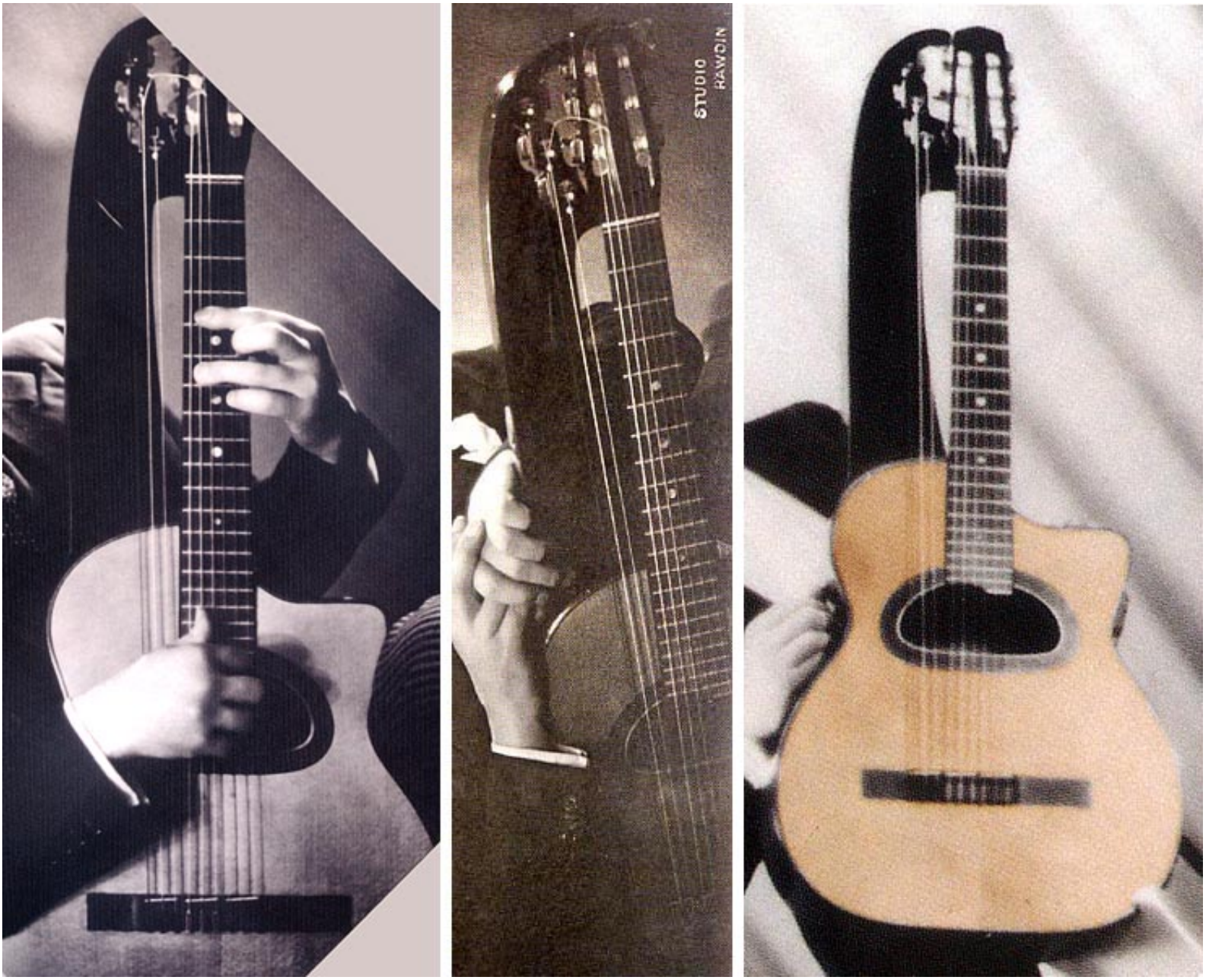
The total figure of Selmer harp guitars built is still unknown – Charle told me that he has personally seen five specimens and puts total Selmer harp guitar numbers at "about one dozen." He further explained that things are clouded by the fact that identical serial numbers were used for 4-string tenor Selmer guitars! Listed in the Selmer notebooks (as reported by Charle in his Appendix) are 4-strings #275, 276 and 277, with dates of 4/14/33 (for the first) and 3/24/33 (for the last two). As Francois Charle explained to me, "Numbers on the list aren't always right, many mistakes appear like double numbers." Understandable - but how a *sequence* of identical numbers was used both for tenor guitars and harp guitars makes no sense to me. It also makes the exact dating of the harp guitars difficult – as the tenors all have exact completion dates, while the harp guitars have none.

Certainly, five to a hypothetical dozen production harp guitars is a small number, proving that while Maccaferri continued to promote 9-string harp guitars during his entire performing career, their popularity had dramatically waned by this time. I've never seen a photograph of any other guitarist with the Selmer harp guitar, and since at least two of those surviving were purportedly "the one Maccaferri played," it's likely that many of them just ended up with him.

However, in the three known photos of Maccaferri with a Selmer, his appears to be the same instrument – curiously, a *21-fret version*, as opposed to the 24-fret production model, with the headstock seemingly unstamped (i.e.: bare). As the faint stamp is somewhat difficult to capture in photographs, it is impossible

to say if it is there or not in these images. If the headstock stamp is indeed missing, then this would indicate to me that this was his sole, unstamped "personal Selmer" – though why he would limit himself to 21 frets, yet include 24 for Selmer buyers is a mystery.

The only other possible candidate for the one appearing in Maccaferri's photos is #275 – and that's *only* if you believe that, 1) The headstock stamp is present in all three Maccaferri photos – we just can't see it, and 2) # 275's 21-fret fingerboard is original, and not a 24-fret extension broken off and cleanly repaired. It should be noted that the stamp is clearly visible in all photos of #275. My guess would be that Maccaferri played an unstamped first example of the Selmer harp guitar.



Maccaferri's 21-fret Selmer

Mystery Maccaferri Harp Guitars

Besides all the previous instruments, which are frustrating to date, but at least *exist* in photographic records, there are additional mystery Maccaferris of which *no* photographic evidence seems to exist. Did the instruments, in fact, ever exist?

The Selmer book states that Maccaferri harp guitars "exceptionally might have six (sub-bass strings)." Asked about these purported instruments, François Charle replied "I don't have any proof for a 6-(sub-bass)-string Selmer Maccaferri harp (guitar), I was just told about (them). I only really saw five 3-(sub-bass) string Maccaferri Selmer harp (guitars)." My suspicion is that these 6 + 6 harp guitars never existed, Charle's source perhaps describing the 5 + 6 c.1927 catalog version.

The next mystery Maccaferri harp guitar is/are actually *three* harp guitars. Meaning, they are three contradictory, individually-described instruments, but I believe we're really after just *one* – and in fact, one we already know: the curious Type 6 above. In fact, had Jeremy Tubbs not discovered and then shared the rare photo of the Type 6 that proved the existence of a Maccaferri with seven strings on the neck, we'd still be scratching our heads today. Ironically, the evidence of the seven-strings-on-neck comes entirely from Maccaferri himself – *his* words, transcribed by two different interviewers (with a third author further complicating things later). The sources are:

- "Mario Maccaferri: Interview" by George Clinton, *Guitar: the magazine for all guitarists*, Jan, 1976
- "Living Legend" by Dick Boak, *Acoustic Guitar* magazine, March/April 1992
- "Maccaferri History: The Guitars of Mario Maccaferri," by Michael Wright, *Vintage Guitar* online article (originally *Vintage Guitar* March & April 1995 issues)
- *Guitar Stories Volume 2* by Michael Wright, 2000

The pertinent particulars are these:

Clinton: Quoting Mario Maccaferri: *"I had used one with seven strings but I preferred the nine…"* Later, (quote 2) *"…the seven strings, incidentally, were on the neck. I found it very difficult and had to go back to the six strings…".* And finally, (quote 3) *"…mine were floating strings beyond seven."*

Boak: Boak stated that, during his London period, Maccaferri *"became fascinated by his latest creation, a harp guitar with seven playing strings on the neck and five bass strings for accompaniment, and he performed with that instrument for some time after its completion."*

Wright (who read the two previous articles): In his 1995 VG articles, he mentioned a *"harp-guitar with seven strings on the fingerboard and an additional five unfretted bass strings."* In the 2000 VG book, Wright reported a *9-course harp guitar, with seven strings on the neck and two additional bass strings*. (Wright later told me that he believes the latter to be the accurate version.)

First, to clarify what Maccaferri was describing in his Clinton interview: I have not provided the context in which the quotes were given because, frankly, it is missing in the original article as well. Clinton did a

rather poor job of presenting the quotes, without any clarification, linearity, or surrounding logic. Quote 1 is simply a casual, incomplete statement – Maccaferri omitting reference to floating strings, and then *including* them in the "count" of his 9-string (3+6) standard harp guitar (the "nine") but *not* including them in the other count of 7-on-the-neck plus "x." Quote 2 clarifies that there were 7 on the neck as opposed to his standard 6. Quote 3 clarifies that (being a harp guitar) it had floating strings beyond the seventh neck string. Unfortunately, he never states how many sub-bass strings it had, nor what time period this was.

Boak's quote gives us the same 7-on-the-neck harp guitar with 5 sub-basses specified, remembered by Maccaferri as being in his London period.

Wright originally repeated Boak's 5+7 harp guitar description three years after Boak. Five years later, Wright changed his description to a 9-string, 2+7 harp guitar. He subsequently informed me that the book would be the more accurate, and that the information likely came from either discussion with Maccaferri's widow Maria or from material she showed him. As he had access to Maccaferri's files (the same files in which Tubbs would later discover and copy the Type 7 photograph), Wright could have even glimpsed this photo (he cannot recall). All we know is that his stated 2+7 version comes closest to the existing Type 7 (3+7) instrument. My feeling is that we should discount Wright's conflicting reports and accept that he either saw the Type 7 photo, incorporated information from Clinton and Boak, or both.

Readers may make of this what they will. I find it simple – one of just two scenarios: a 12-course (5+7) harp guitar, built and played in Maccaferri's London period (circa 1929, but unclear) *or* the 10-course (3+7) Type 7 harp guitar we have a picture of. I would bet on the latter; for one thing, the instrument is right there in front of us. Maccaferri built it and was likely its sole user. He just either never mentioned it to anyone – or never described it accurately. In this scenario, Maccaferri simply misremembered the number of bass strings and the exact timeframe/city. He also may have been back and forth between London and Paris to make this Selmer-labelled instrument. If the former scenario, then there was a prior instrument with a couple extra basses. (Maccaferri did indeed "prefer nine" – three floating basses on a six-string neck, which he seems to have considered a "soloist" model, five basses being used as an "accompaniment" model.)

A final mystery Maccaferri threatened to confound things even further. This was purportedly a "10-string guitar…that was shaped like an 'L' …(built)…"in about '33…(that) had tubes (pipes) on the bottom like an organ that would resound every note." (!)

Maccaferri described this fascinating experiment – which he gave a concert on – in his February 1986 Guitar Player interview with George Gruhn and Dan Forte. He was describing it as having taken place *after* his Selmer contract, as a continuation of his effort to eliminate wolf notes on the guitar – something he believes the internal soundbox eliminated on gut-strung classical guitars. This bizarre experiment was to further control the "sound equilibrium" with "these tubes."

Upon first hearing of this alleged third "10-string," I immediately wondered if it could have been, in fact, one of the two other 10-strings - the Type 5 and the Type 6. Until I located an image (next page):

Maccaferri's cat frustratingly chose this exact moment to jump up and obscure some of the details, but could not hide the obvious: this is a incredibly clever and ingenious invention!

We can see that, despite the Gruhn/Forte inference, it was *not* a 10-string but had a standard 6-string neck. I suspect the stenographer just mixed things up entirely, as Maccaferri described it a second time in 1986 (without any mention of stringing) in his *American Lutherie* interview. That description helps us interpret the unique highly contrasted photograph at right (from the January 1976 issue of Clinton's *Guitar* magazine):

"While I was convalescing (during the six months in 1933 from his film set accident - GM), I designed and made a new type of guitar, in which the bridge, instead of being attached to the soundboard, was tied to the body via a rear extension made light wood strips, and then connected by a rod to the center of a loudspeaker. Thus the vibrations of the strings were transferred directly to the speaker. Attached to the bottom were twelve chromatically tuned organ pipes. The combination produced a beautiful tone, good volume and no wolf tones."

Future Discoveries:

We know from the images that at least one of each of the designs from the c.1927 Maccaferri catalog must have been built, and happily, examples of the Type 2a and 2b have now been found to survive in wonderful condition. We also know that a 3 + 7 Selmer-labelled instrument was built, and possibly an additional 5 + 7 experimental instrument.

Perhaps over time, anonymous, undiscovered owners of some of these rarities will come forward. Keep your fingers crossed, and keep checking back – Harpguitars.net will be around for some time and chances increase every year that Internet searches will put us in contact!

Maccaferri's Predecessors and Followers

Everyone has by now become aware of the huge popularity of Maccaferri's distinctive Selmer guitars – along with Selmer models made after his tenure – made famous by Django Reinhardt and others. These instruments – both D-hole and oval-hole models – were widely copied, and continue to be copied even today (probably even *more* so today).

What about *harp guitars*? Maccaferri was of course directly influenced by Mozzani, who was directly influenced by the Viennese luthier Friedrich Schenk. Did anyone follow Maccaferri? I have only found one *harp guitar* that bears a resemblance – this c.1940 catalog instrument at left by Antoine Di Mauro. It looks like a beautiful carved top cutaway jazz guitar with a D-hole, pickguard and three sub-bass strings positioned quite far to the left. The catalog date is unknown, but we know this appeared well after Maccaferri's Selmer period.

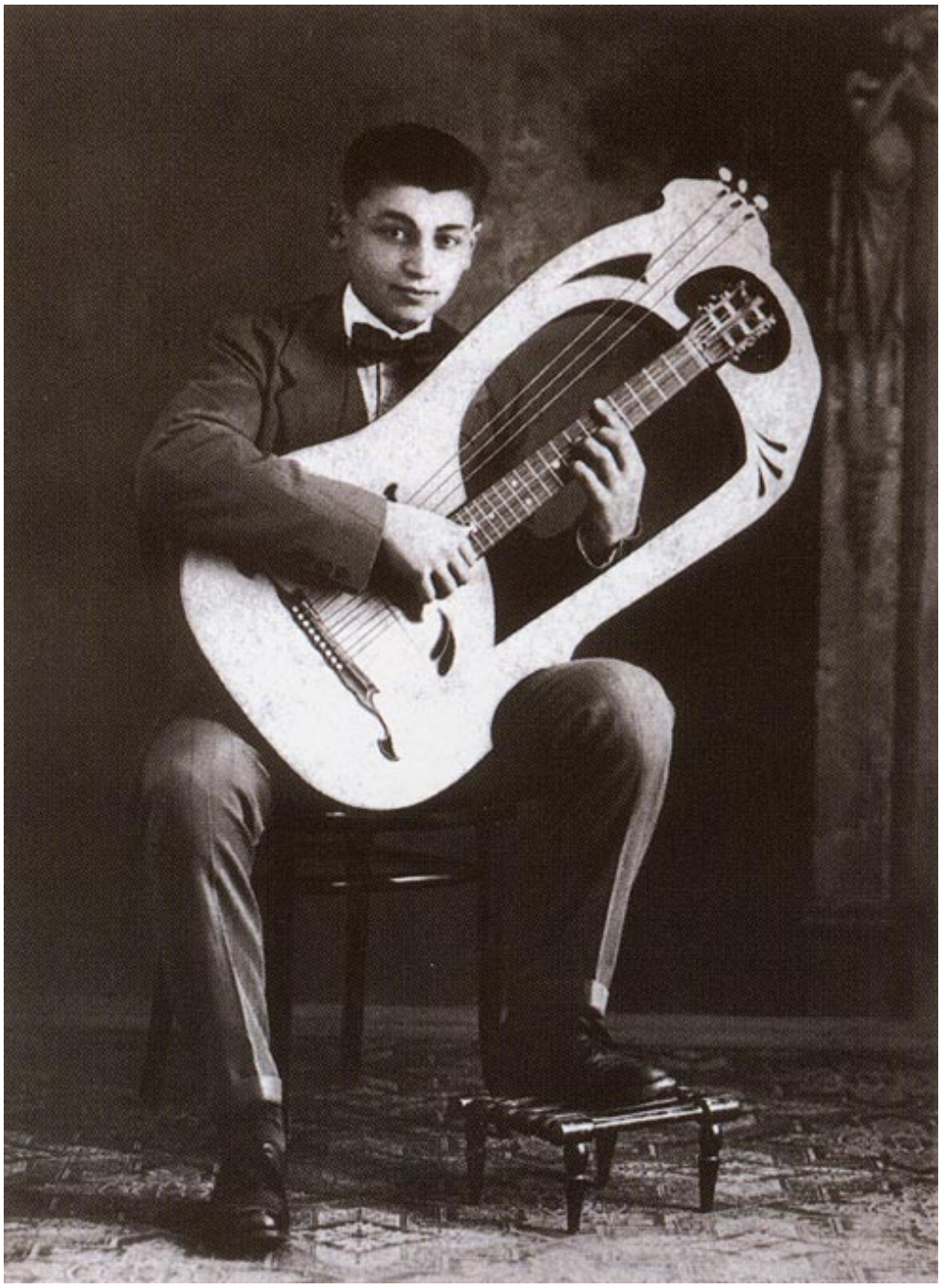
There *is*, however, a curious form of Italian harp guitar introduced *before* Maccaferri's 1923 designs with similarities enough to cause me to wonder if Maccaferri might have been inspired equally by *those* – combining their style and shape with the Mozzani aesthetic to create his own new designs.

The key maker of these modern-looking instruments was the Giulietti family: father and two sons who all played and built instruments in Milan. The earliest known example is the specimen at right by Tullio (the father), dated December 15, 1918. The Giulietti instruments below with sloped "cutaways" were all built before the end of the 1920s. In his 1986 Guitar Player interview, Maccaferri states that he was the first to offer a cutaway (a natural outgrowth of the Mozzani lyre guitar's higher fret access), so perhaps he had not seen the Milan instruments (or considered them true significant cutaways).

No modern Maccaferri harp guitar copies have been attempted in any of his styles, beyond the fantasy “What if?” harp-ukulele I commissioned from renowned Gypsy guitar builder Michael Dunn in 2010 (left).

Finally, in 2020 Benoît Meulle-Stef (pictured), who has built many Mozzani-inspired instruments, designed a Maccaferri-inspired model of his own, completed in 2023 (below).

The Maestro Plays His Mentor's



Mario Maccaferri, age 16 in 1916, with a Mozzani harp guitar.

Until Mario Maccaferri got the itch to create his own designs around 1923, he played 9-string harp guitars designed by his teacher Luigi Mozzani. Maccaferri had become Mozzani's guitar student and lutherie apprentice at age eleven, and so may have had a hand in building the Mozzani instruments seen here.

Circa 1920 with another Mozzani.

George Clinton captioned the photo at left “at the time of his concert at the Conservatory in Milan, 1926.” His age certainly looks about right, but why wouldn’t he be using one of his own harp guitars for his concert?

Here, he plays the same Mozzani during the same period. This very distinctive instrument (I've never seen another with that flower petal pattern around the soundhole) has survived, in the collection of Lorenzo Frignani, displayed at the September 2019 Acoustic Guitar Village exhibit in Cremona, Italy in an outstanding exhibit he put together (mostly with his own collection) with Francesco Taranto.

Following images are also from the exhibit, and include the two Type 2b Maccaferri's shown above, along with other Mozzanis and other Italian guitars.

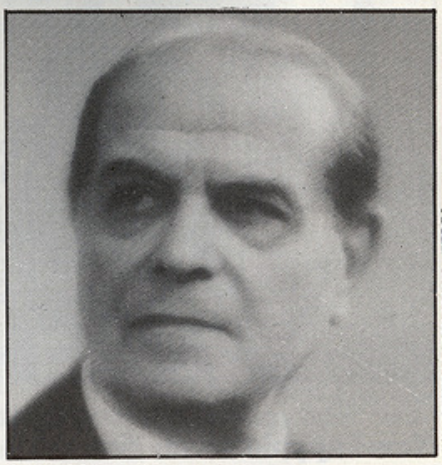

Alma Cajon

It should come as no surprise that Mario Maccaferri had an “up close and personal” relationship with the Mozzani harp guitars he helped build, and certainly played, during his tenure there. I’m fascinated by the story of Maccaferri returning to Italy in 1951 for the liquidation sale of his mentor’s workshop inventory, and coming home with five harp guitars, all of which survive today (I have to pinch myself to remember that I actually own one of these).

According to John Monteleone, Maccaferri acquired these five Mozzani harp guitars in the 1951 liquidation sale of the Mozzani workshop/school, which closed in 1947. Michael Wright had believed that they were acquired on a return visit to Italy while Mozzani was still alive (which would have been pre-1943). The inventory of the sale listed seven chitarra-lyra (no styles or models distinguished), so it seems clear that Maccaferri indeed purchased five of these seven. Monteleone remembers them being stacked in *"plain flat cardboard boxes (yikes!) for many years until I arranged to have hard shell cases made for them."* Maccaferri also performed various repairs on them: *"The guitars were in mostly very good condition with one or two exceptions. The common problem with the Mozzanis had to do with keeping the harp string tuners from breaking loose. I had also done some crack repairs back then."* The center instrument below appears to have one of these tuner area repairs.

A short 1983 article in Classical Guitar Magazine (right and next page) describes a visit to Maccaferri's where four of the instruments had recently been restored. It’s unclear when these instruments were built at the Mozzani workshop; did Maccaferri's himself have a hand in their construction? I recall hearing that no, these were later instruments – although he had built identical models himself, and knew every detail of their construction. According to Monteleone, Maccaferri acknowledged that the clever Mozzani neck adjustment – he loved the floating neck – was nevertheless a problem in the long-term, due to the "design flaw" of mixing metal and wood. He still held Mozzani's instruments in the highest esteem.

More Mozzani



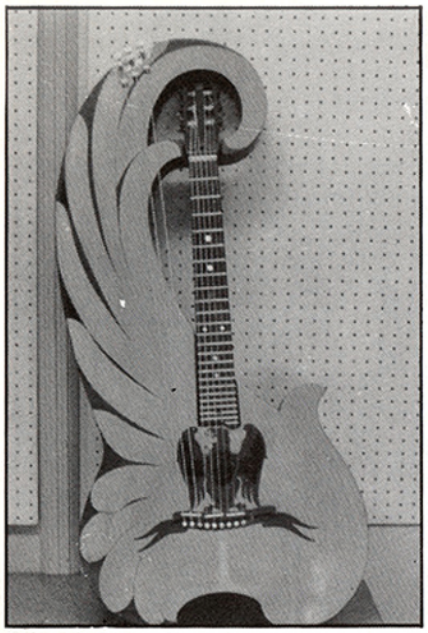
COURTESY MARIO MACCAFERRI

Luigi Mozzani

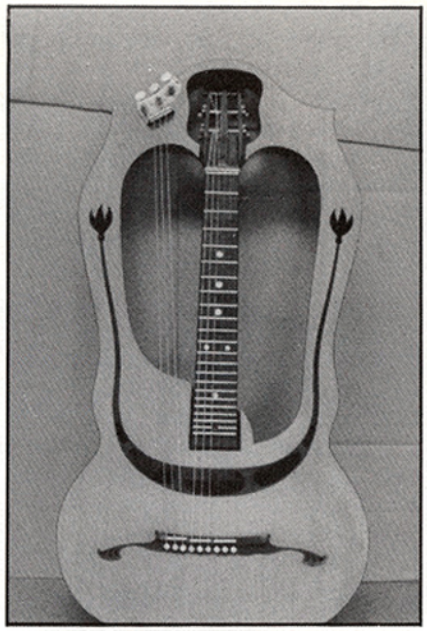
In our last issue we announced that Mario Maccaferri had just completed the restoration of two original Luigi Mozzani guitars. On a recent visit to New York, Maurice Summerfield called on Mario and found that the master luthier/guitarist had in fact completed the restoration of no fewer than four of these magnificent instruments. Maurice took photographs, and as we thought that readers would like to see these rare guitars, they are displayed on the next page.

Mario also discovered recently two practice guitars designed by him in the 1920s. He explained to Maurice that, as a touring concert artist, he spent many hours on trains travelling between the major cities of Europe. The folding guitar shown on the next page helped him practise for many hours that would otherwise have been wasted. Also shown is a silent guitar that Mario devised for practice in hotel rooms during the early hours so as not to disturb the other guests. It would be quite a good idea to instigate a competition for the Worst Guitarist of the Year, and offer one of these to the winner.

PHOTO: COLIN COOPER

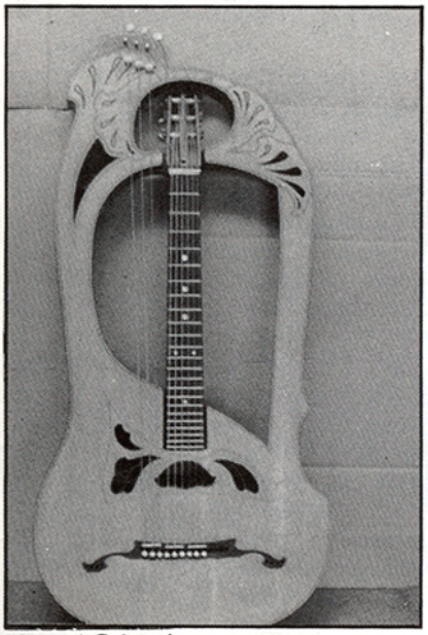


Mozzani Guitar 1



Mozzani Guitar 2

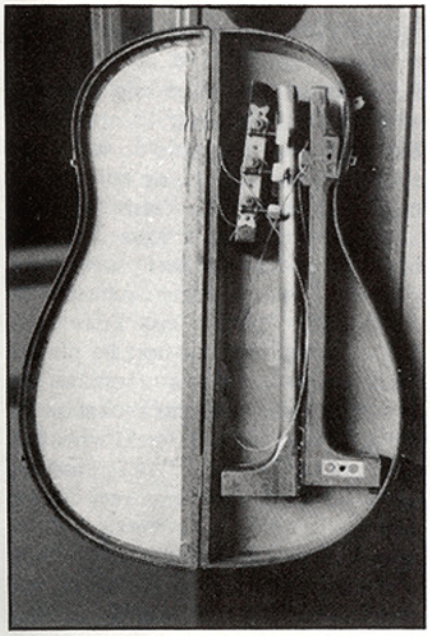
Mozzani Guitar 3



Mozzani Guitar 4

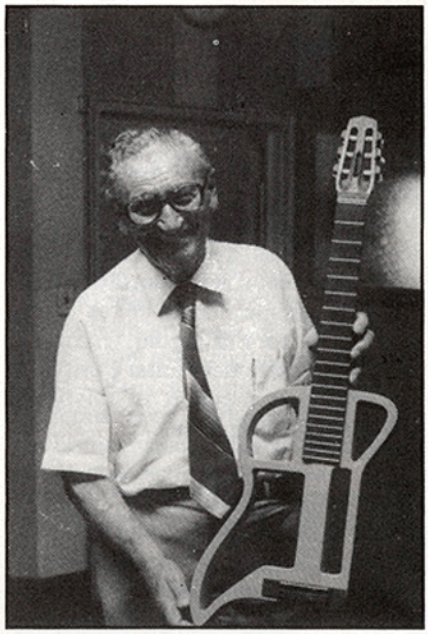
Prototype Maccaferri Plastic/Electric Classical Guitar, 1953.

Prototype of new Maccaferri Classical Guitar.



1921 Collapsible Practice Guitar.

Mario demonstrating Practice Guitar.



Silent Practice Guitar.

PHOTOS: MAURICE J. SUMMERFIELD

After Maccaferri's death in 1993, the five Mozzani harp guitars were sold to collector Scott Chinery by Mario's widow. Here are all five in color from Michael Wright's 2000 book *Guitar Stories Volume Two*.

Upon Chinery's passing in 2002, the Mozzanis were dispersed. Finding good homes for Chinery's legendary collection does not seem to have a consideration, and the majority of his guitars disappeared into the four winds. Strangely, two Mozzanis I later examined (#2 & 3 above) were in a terrible state, with cracks, flaws, and some strange finish issues. Chinery reportedly requested to have some of the originally bare tops varnished.

Again, it behooves serious scholars of these instruments to keep tabs on rare models, and I've kept track of these as much as I could. From what I've learned, Chinery's collection was purchased about 2003 and immediately liquidated by one Michael Indelicato, split up among eight or so cash-rich friends, virtually none commonly known to the public as guitar collectors or dealers. I know certain instruments changed hands many times. Some eventually ended up at Bernunzio's, some with Michael Catterino at the Hollywood Guitar Center, certainly many other guitar stores that escaped my notice, and the remainder at E-Guitars in San Rafael, a store owned for a time by Indelicato.

As for the Mozzanis, the two on the right remain incognito; twenty years later, I've *no* idea where they went. (Note that one is actually a 6-string, with no added sub-basses.)

The instrument at left was first sold to YouTube guitar teacher Steve Stine, who flipped it to a wonderful gentleman collector who would become a friend: Jim Forderer (who sold me the Maccaferri, as discussed above). He shared it with the public at his many displays at the GAL and La Guitarra California guitar shows, before passing on to me shortly before his passing. It is a true treasure.

The above center instrument was at E Guitars when I visited, along with the smaller Schenk-style chitarra-lyra to its left. Both were inexpensive and yet I passed on them, due to condition. My friend in Brussels, Benoît Meulle-Stef of BMS Guitars acquired the center specimen and enjoyed it for a while (he's built several Mozzani-inspired modern harp guitars), then sold it to a private party in New York, where it soon landed at Retrofret (available as of this writing).

The small terz-size instrument eventually made its way to the permanent collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, on display when I visited in 2019, as seen at right.

A final coda to the story of Maccaferri's collection of Mozzani harp guitars is the wonderful photo record left of Maccaferri playing these very instruments (all but the Eagle Wing). Three of them were taken by his wife Maria at their home soon after their arrival in New York, with one (in color) taken later by John Monteleone in 1982. Anyone who owns one of these instruments should be doubly proud of its history!

In *my* case, I have the extra benefit of having a record of Maccaferri's own modification.

He must not have liked the original friction tuners for the three sub-basses, so plugged the holes and installed his own geared tuners.

To have not just a Mozzani possibly built by the master himself, but owned and tweaked by his best pupil, Mario Maccaferri is about as good as it gets in the world of collecting harp guitars.

Left and below:

Before and After: The beautiful carved-back Mozzani Art Nouveau model with original sub-bass extension, later modified by Maccaferri.

Appendices

Instrument Specifications

Dimensions		**Type 2b** (Frignani)		**Type 5** (Miner)		**Type 7** (Selmer book)	
		mm	**inches**	mm	inches	mm	inches
A	Width of upper bout	309	12.17	356	14.00		
B	Width of waist	254	10.00	345	13.60		
C	Width of lower bout	418	16.46	416	16.38	400	15.75
D	Length of body	479	18.86	457	18.00	475	18.70
E	Body depth tail	100	3.94	100	3.94		
F	Body depth lower bout	95	3.74	114	4.50	105	4.13
G	Body depth waist	92	3.62	89	3.50		
H	Body depth upper bout	77	3.03	86	3.40		
I	Body depth heel	62	2.44	86	3.38		
J	Neck depth heel	19	0.75	18	0.70		
K	Neck depth nut	18.5	0.73	18	0.70		
L	Head depth tip	18	0.71	18	0.70		
M	Length of head	172.5	6.79	175	6.88	470	18.50
N	Body neck joint to soundhole	140	5.51	44	1.75		
O	Overall length	965	37.99	962	37.88	950	37.40
P	Scale length	630	24.80	616	24.25	620	24.41
Q	String spacing at bridge	112	4.41	102	4.00		
R	Soundhole width	95.5	3.76	160	6.31	155	6.10
R	Soundhole height	95.5	3.76	76	3.00	70	2.76
S	Body Bridge edge to tail	138	5.43	127	5.00		
T	Head width max	55	2.17	64	2.50		
U	Neck width at nut	49	1.93	51	2.00	51	2.01
V	Neck width at body	57	2.24	60	2.38	61	2.40
W	Neck length body-to-nut	316	12.44	318	12.50		
X	Bridge length	225	8.86	254	10.00	225	8.86
Y	Bridge depth	29	1.14	30	1.19		
Z	Bridge height	6	0.24	9	0.34		
a	Head angle	11	0.43	minimal			

The 1926 Rovinazzi Catalog

PREISLISTE

Dieser Instrumenten die nach dem Berühmte meister LUIGI MOZZANI aus besten trockenen Holzer, vorzügliche Arbeit, und genaus Mensur gemacht sind.

Das Sümme ist laute und schöne.

N. 1 - Mandoline (original Mozzani model) extra-feine qualität, sauberste Arbeit . . . . Stück L. 300

N. 2 - Mandoline (bombè model) . . . . . „ „ 250

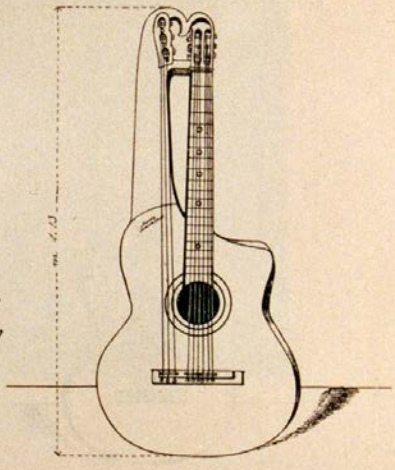
N. 3 - Mandola, richtige Mensur vorzügliche ton „ „ 300

N. 4 - Guitarre (6 saiten) . . . . . „ „ 350

N. 5 - Guitarre (7-8-9 saiten) . . . . . „ „ 500

N. 6 - Guitarre-lira für solisten (wie bild) . . „ „ 1000

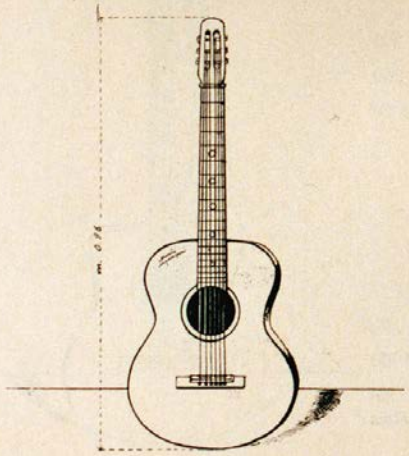
Alle sämtliche Instrumente sind mit einer guten zuferlässigen Mechanik versehen und die Griffbretter sind tadellos rein, mit Ebenholz estrafein.



3

Instrumenten die nach dem Künstleriche geigenbauer MARIO MACCAFERRI aus Cento der besten Schüler von Luigi Mozzani.

N. 1 - Kontraguitarre für begleitung 9 saiten 5ª tief mit Halsbewegung und Griffbretter ebenholz richtige Mensur (diapason) 1,14×0,45 (wie das bild) Stück L. 950



N. 2 - Idem 11 saiten boden bombè 0,98×0,42 . . . . . Stück L. 750

N. 3 - Guitarre genaue Mensur 9 saiten extrafein für solisten boden bombè mit hals bewegung Griffbretter ebenholz 0,96×0,41 . . . . . „ „ 750

N. 4 - Guitarre normal 6 saiten boden bombè höhe zarge 0,95×0,38 „ „ 480

N. 5 - Guitarre normal 6 saiten 0,95×0,38 . . . . . „ „ 400

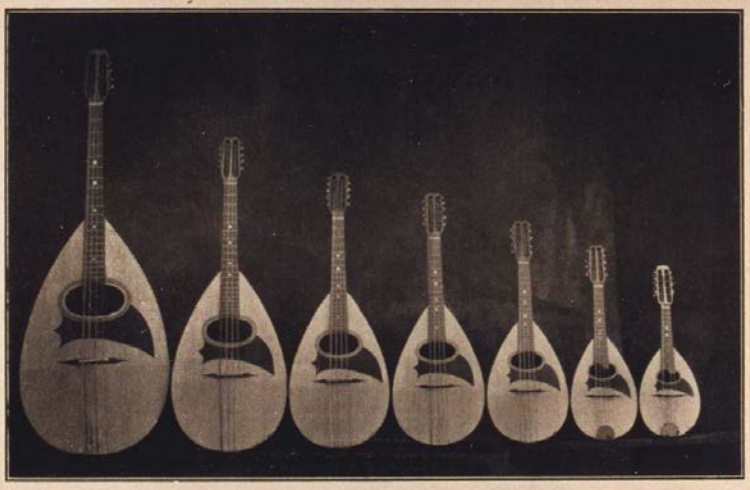
N. 6 - Guitarre normal 6 saiten spanische Model 0,95×0,38 . . „ „ 340

N. 7 - Kleine Modell 0,95×0,32 . „ „ 250

N. 8 - Guitarre terzino boden bombè mensure 0,38×0,35 . . „ „ ~~250~~ 300

4

SCALA ISTRUMENTI A PLETTRO



5

N. 1 - Mandoline 24 teilung extra höhe zarge 0,62 × 0,205 . . Stück L. 300

N. 2 - Mandoline 24 teilung extra höhe zarge 0,62 × 0,205 (convesso) . . . . . „ „ 290

N. 3 - Mandoline 24 teilung extra höhe zarge 0,62 × 0,205 (semiconvesso . . . . . „ „ 280

N. 4 - Mandoline quartino extra 0,54 × 0,18 (Kleine) . . . . „ „ 300

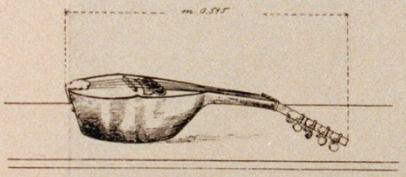
N. 5 - Mandola in C contralto 0,71 × 0,24 . . . . . Stück L. 360

N. 6 - Mandola in G tenore 0,82 × 0,27 . . . . . „ „ 400

N. 7 - Mandola in B baritono 0,89 × 0,30 . . . . . „ „ 500

N. 8 - Mandoloncello für mandolinen Orchester, boden (semiconvesso) 1,01 × 0,34 . . . „ „ 580

N. 9 - Mandolone basso, 1,35 × 0,45 „ „ 700



Sämtliche Instrumente sind aus besten, trockenen Hölzer, Vorzügliche Arbeit, Genaue Mensur, Patent Mechanik marcke. Jedes Instrumente trägt nebenstehende Stempel.

Mario Maccaferri

6

Strumenten selbst gearbeitet die nach dem Liutaio UMBERTO DALL'OSSO schüler von Gebrüder FORNASARI aus Bologna.

N. 1 – Contraguitarre 9 u. mehre saiten Stück L. 580
N. 2 – Mandolinen zum verschiedenen Dall'Osso modell . . . . . „ „ 260
N. 3 – Guitarre 6-7 saiten . . . Stück L. 230

Diese Istrumenten haben reine Ton und sehr zauber gearbaitet sind.

Guitarren und Mandolinen original BALBONI Model aus Ferrara Schüler von LUIGI MOZZANI – Prima qualität sehr zauber gearbeitet laute stimme für solisten empfehlüng zum. Gute Preise.

Guitarre und. Contraguitarren *Fornasari, Sblisiga, Bacci, ecc.*

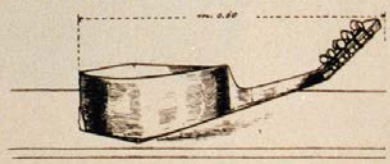
Sowie alte Instrumente von *Guermandi, Zucconi, Aldrovandi,* dem Jahre 1700-1800.

Grösse ausvall Echte Neopolitanische und Römische Mandolinen und Guitarren von uns direkt aus den ersten Fabricken sind.

N. 1 – Mandoline acero Weiss . . Stück L. 55
N. 2 – Mandoline palissandro braun „ „ 65
N. 3 – Guitarre acero Weiss . . . „ „ 60
N. 4 – Guitarre palissandro braun . „ „ 70

Originali Spanischer Guitarren zum billiger preise, bei grösseren Bestellungen Können wir eine preiser massigung eintreten lassen.

Konzert und solo Violinen die nach dem Künstlerischer meister *Pollastri, Monterumici,* und *Poggi* stehts im Haus zu verkäufen.



7

VERKAUF-BEDINGUNGEN

Die Verpackung für eine stück Guitarre-Lira Mozzani . . . . . Kostes L. 60
Die Verpackung für Mezza-Lira . . . . . „ „ 50
Die Verpackung für Guitarre normale . . . . . „ „ 30
Die Verpackung für Mandoline . . . . . „ „ 20
Die Verpackung für eine stück Mezza-Lira Maccaferri . . . . . „ „ 50
Die Verpackung für Guitarre normale . . . . . „ „ 30
Die Verpackung für Mandoline . . . . . „ „ 20

Wenn Sie zwei Stück derselbe Marcke Käufen Konnen, die Verpackung Wir frei geben an, Sie, zu lassen.

8

UNSER REISENDER:

PROF. FIORENTINI ASTORRE

BERÜHMTER GUITARRE-VIRTUOSE

9

CASA FONDATA NEL 1848

DITTA VALERIANO ROVINAZZI - BOLOGNA

VIA ZAMBONI. 7 A B C (PRESSO LE DUE TORRI)

PROPRIETARIO: MARANESI CAV. PIETRO

CATALOGO PREZZO

DEGLI ISTRUMENTI A CORDA CHITARRE E MANDOLINI TIPO MOZZANI DI CENTO ESEGUITI DAGLI ALLIEVI MACCAFERRI MARIO DI CENTO - BALBONI DI FERRARA DALL'OSSO DI BOLOGNA

11

ISTRUMENTI ORIGINALI DEL PROF. LUIGI MOZZANI

COSTRUITI DALLA LIUTERIA ARTISTICA CENTESE

Il Prof. LUIGI MOZZANI oltre che fabbricare Istrumenti di primo ordine, è celebre chitarrista. Ha dato concerti in tutto il mondo ed è ricordato nei migliori centri musicali della Germania, della Sassonia, del Belgio, della Russia, della Francia ecc. ecc.

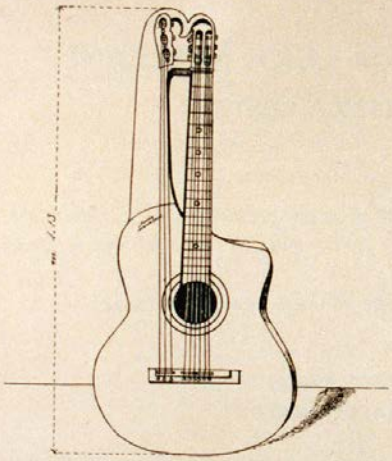
Da diverso tempo si è dedicato alla costruzione di istrumenti musicali creando bellissime

CHITARRA-LIRA
CHITARRA-MEZZA LIRA
MANDOLINO EMILIANO

Il mandolino emiliano ha una forma speciale comodissima per il suonatore e dà all'istrumento una sonorità eccezionale oltre che conservare una voce pastosa e dolcissima. Come gli antichi maestri egli si è creato una vernice propria, rossa sangue molto italiana.

Questi Istrumenti del celebre Maestro LUIGI Prof. MOZZANI sono fabbricati con legno stagionato e lavorati artisticamente e con giustissime misure, e di voce forte e dolce.

Note below that Maccaferri's Type 2a is illustrated on a Mozzani page.



Chitarra-lira Mozzani originale per Solisti . . . . L. 1000

Chitarra-lira Mozzani originale con 6 corde e 3 bassi fondo leggermente curvo . . . . . „ 500

Chitarra mezza-lira Mozzani originale per Solisti a 6 corde e una corda bassa, fondo leggermente curvo . . . . . „ 700

Chitarra semplice a 6 corde . . . . . „ 350

Mandolino originale Mozzani finissimo di perfetta lavorazione . . . . . „ 300

Mandolino bombè . . . . . „ 250

Mandola di giusta misura . . . . . „ 250

Tutti gli istrumenti originali del Mozzani sono per concertisti e sono montati con meccaniche speciali, hanno la tastiera di una intonazione perfetta e di vero ebano. Le lire e mezze-lire hanno il manico regolabile

14

ISTRUMENTI DEL MACCAFERRI MARIO DI CENTO

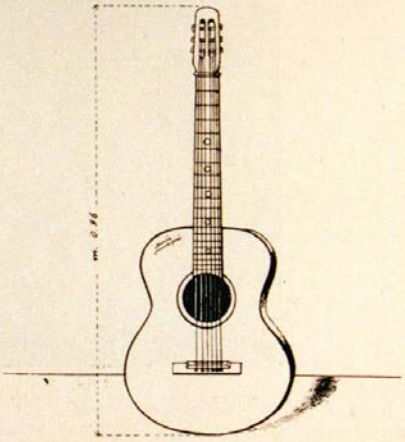
ALLIEVO DEL PROF. LUIGI MOZZANI

Anche il MACCAFERRI MARIO, nato a Cento, ebbe una disposizione speciale per l'arte musicale, si diede con passione a frequentare la Scuola della Liuteria Artistica Centese e subito si distinse e fu il migliore allievo.

I suoi Istrumenti sono paragonabili a quelli del Suo Maestro, alcuni dei quali sono da preferire fra questi.

La mezza-lira Maccaferri ha una curva nel manico che permette al concertista di scorrere con facilità sulla tastiera.

Gli Istrumenti Maccaferri oltre che essere solidissimi hanno una voce dolcissima e pastosa e una sonorità eccezionale.



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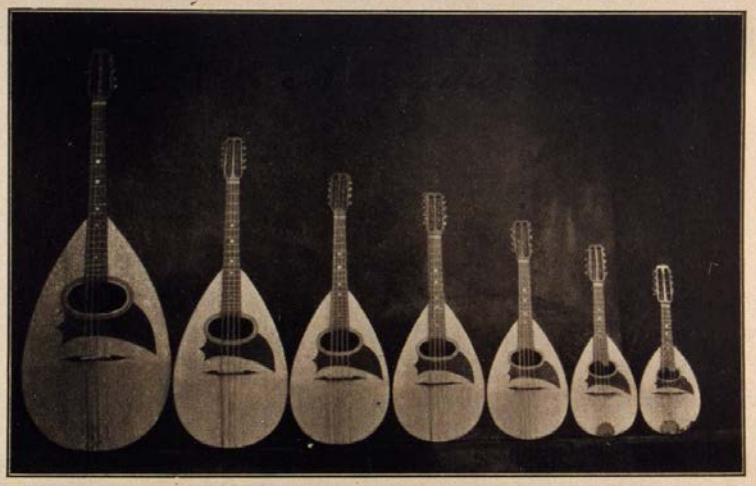
SCALA ISTRUMENTI A PLETTRO



16

Chitarrone mezza-lira originale Maccaferri 3 bassi e 6 corde, fondo leggermente curvo, della misura di m. 1,14×0,45 L. 950

Mezza-lira originale Maccaferri 3 bassi e 6 corde, fondo leggermente curvo, della misura di m. 0,98×0,42 . . . „ 480

Mezza-lira originale Maccaferri 5 bassi e 6 corde, fondo leggermente curvo, della misura di m. 0,96×0,41 . . . „ 450

Chitarra normale a 6 corde fondo bombè fascie alte, misura m. 0,95×0,38 . „ 480

Chitarra normale 6 corde, m. 0,95×0,38 „ 400

Chitarra modello spagnolo, m. 0,95×0,38 „ 340

Piccolo modello, m. 0,95×0,32 . . . . „ 250

Chitarra terzino fondo bombè della misura di m. 0,38×0,35 . . . . . „ 300

Mandolino a 24 tasti, fascie alte, misura m. 0,62×0,205 . . . . . L. 300

Mandolino a 24 tasti, fascie alte, convesso, misura m. 0,62×0,205 . . . . . „ 290

Mandolino semiconvesso, m. 0,62×0,205 „ 280

Mandolino quartino, m. 0,54×0,18 . . „ 300

Mandola in Do contralto, m. 0,61×0,24 „ 360

Mandola in Sol tenore, m. 0,82×0,27 . „ 400

Mandola in Si bemolle, m. 0,89×0,30 . „ 500

Mandoloncello molto indicato per orchestrine a plettro semiconvesso, misura metri 1,01×0,34 . . . . . „ 580

Mandolone basso m. 1,35×0,45. . . . „ 700

Tutti questi Istrumenti del Maccaferri sono garantiti per anni cinque da qualunque difetto di fabbricazione, poichè costruiti con legname speciale e verniciati con un buon spessore di vernice trasparente e bella. La tastiera è tutta in ebano vero; i tasti sono tutti d'argentone.

Questo materiale oltre che solidissimo dona all' istrumento molta voce dolcissima e pastosa.

Mario Maccaferri

17

ISTRUMENTI LAVORATI A MANO DAL LIUTAIO BOLOGNESE DALL' OSSO UMBERTO

ALLIEVO DEI FRATELLI FORNASARI DI BOLOGNA

Chitarra con 9 corde . . . . . L. 580

Chitarra da 7-8 corde . . . . . „ 230

Mandolini di diversi modelli . . . . . da L. 200 a . . . „ 360

Questi Istrumenti hanno un tono perfetto e sono lavorati molto bene.

ISTRUMENTI LAVORATI A MANO DAL LIUTAIO FERRARESE BALBONI

ALLIEVO DEL CELEBRE MOZZANI PROF. LUIGI DI CENTO

Questi Istrumenti sono di prima qualità e molto speciali per concertisti.

Prezzi miti.

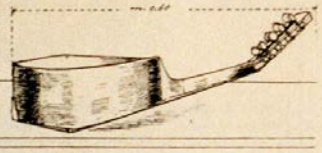
18

Chitarra a 6 e 9 corde – FORNASARI – SBLISIGA – BACCI ecc.

Collezione di Istrumenti antichi dei celebri liutai
GUERMANDI – ZUCCONI – ALDROVANDI dell'anno 1700-1800

Grande assortimento di mandolini napoletani e romani e chitarre provenienti direttamente dalle migliori fabbriche.

Mandolino acero bianco . . . . . L. 55
Mandolino palissandro scuro . . . . . „ 65
Chitarra acero bianca . . . . . „ 60
Chitarra palissandro scura . . . . . „ 70



Chitarre originali spagnuole a prezzi miti – Per forti acquisti si concede uno sconto.

Violini da concerto per solisti dei celebri liutai bolognesi:
POLLASTRI AUGUSTO – MONTERUMICI ARMANDO e POGGI ANSALDO
sempre pronti in magazzeno.

19

CONDIZIONI DI VENDITA

Imballo per una chitarra-lira Mozzani . . L.
Imballo per una chitarra mezza-lira Mozzani „
Imballo per chitarra normale Mozzani . . „
Imballo per mandolino Mozzani . . . . „

Imballo per una mezza-lira Maccaferri . . L. 50
Imballo per una chitarra normale Maccaferri . . . . . „ 30
Imballo per un mandolino Maccaferri . . „ 10

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4.° La merce viaggia a *rischio e pericolo* del committente.
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STAB. POLIGRAFICI RIUNITI - BOLOGNA

The c. 1927/1928 Maccaferri Catalog

INTRODUZIONE

Ho l' onore di presentare agli amatori della Chitarra e del Mandolino alcuni esemplari o modelli di mia personale fabbricazione che mi lusingo rispondano, per quanto è possibile, non solo alle esigenze dell' arte e dell' estetica, ma anche a quelle pratiche di un facile e agevole maneggio da parte del suonatore o esecutore.

Ma prima stimo utile e opportuno premettere alcuni schiarimenti sulle modificazioni e sui necessari perfezionamenti da me apportati ai ricordati istrumenti.

Le difficoltà più ardue da superare, costruendo istrumenti a pizzico o a plettro, sono com'è noto, quelle relative alla sonorità, intonazione, leggerezza e solidità, che ho creduto opportuno introdurre negli istrumenti di mia esclusiva fabbricazione.

Era tempo di pensare che gl' istrumenti a pizzico ed a plettro non servono soltanto al semplice dilettante o al suonatore ambulante che poco si curano di artistiche esecuzioni ma principalmente a concertisti che con squisito senso d' arte eseguiscono davanti ai pubblici più esigenti ogni brano di musica, ed a orchestre mandolinistiche che contano qualche volta centinaia di esecutori, i quali, diretti da valenti maestri, con ammirabile senso d' arte raggiungono gli effetti più squisiti di questi caratteristici istrumenti. Quindi i loro istrumenti debbono rispondere principalmente a intonazione perfetta e a molta e bella voce.

Per ciò che riguarda i quartini, mandolini, mandole, ecc. per ottenere queste necessarie

qualità si è dovuto anzitutto cambiare forma di cassa armonica (fig. n. 1. e 2.) *poichè quella rotonda a stecche che tutti conosciamo non risponde per voce, solidità e comodità perchè scivola facilmente all'esecutore. Due tipi riuscitissimi escono dal mio laboratorio.*

Fig. 1.

Fig. 2.

La forma N. 1 è la più indicata poichè è costruita tecnicamente come il violino; ha il fondo convesso scavato ed ha le fascie sufficentemente alte.

L'altra N. 2, forma Capriccio, oltre che rispondere in tutto ha una voce più squillante dell'altra e, dato l' incavo che vi é nella parte superiore del fondo permette una certa facilità all' esecutore nel suonare nelle note acute; quindi quest' ultimo istrumento è molto adatto per concertisti.

L' intonazione della tastiera è certamente la parte più importante di questi istrumenti: una tastiera matematicamente intonata non è sufficente, data la differenza di grossezza che

passa fra una corda e l' altra. L'intonazione perfetta l'ho potuta raggiungere solo dopo aver applicato ai miei istrumenti il ponticello a tratti (fig. 3) mediante il quale ogni corda può essere intonata su tutta la tastiera.

Fig. 3.

Le grandi orchestre mandolinistiche sono spesso composte di soli istrumenti a plettro ed a pizzico, e cioè :

A Plettro : Mandolone, Mandoloncello, Mandola baritono (in si b.) Mandola tenore (in sol) Mandola soprano (in do) Mandolino e Quartino.

A Pizzico : Chitarrone (5 bassa) Chitarra normale, Chitarra terzino (3 sopra).

La chitarra : Istrumento dominatore, indispensabile, importantissimo nelle orchestre mandolinistiche, da accompagnamento, è ancor più importante come istrumento solista.

La chitarra, forma comune a 6 corde, come istrumento solista l' ho trovata insufficiente in qualche sua parte, specialmente in ciò che riguarda le note fondamentali e la forza di voce.

Molti chitarristi compositori e concertisti di alta fama quali sono: Regondi, Sor, Costa, Mertz, lamentano non solo la debolezza di voce della Chitarra usata come istrumento solista e da concerto, ma deplorano altresì la deficenza dei bassi insistendo sull' opportunità per non dire necessità di aggiungere qualche altro basso volante all' istrumento.

Molti tentativi sono stati fatti ; si è tentato di applicare 3 bassi alla chitarra di forma comune la quale non ha resistito allo sforzo; si è poi cercato di rimediare con una colonna di legno o di metallo che partiva dal disotto della paletta e veniva ad appoggiarsi col tutto

sulla cassa armonica, a sinistra lateralmente al manico, ma il rimedio riuscì insufficente dato che non potè evitare lo spostamento del manico in avanti derivante dalla tensione delle corde. Si è poi cambiata la forma dell'istrumento foggiandolo sul modello dell' antica Lyra, riuscendo con questo accorgimento a fermare solidamente il manico all' estremità, sui due bracci della Lyra. Anche altri modelli bizzarri con un braccio solo raggiungevano lo scopo. Qualche tipo ha dato veri vantaggi, ma questi istrumenti riuscivano pesanti, scomodi e non avevano nessuna rassomiglianza colla chitarra.

Con la mia forma di chitarra a 9 e a 11 corde, sono convinto di aver raggiunto lo scopo. È di forma comune, ha la cassa armonica prolungata servendo così a sostenere il manico e le corde basse, eliminando in questo modo tutti gl' inconvenienti (fig. 4). Ha un incavo nella parte opposta del prolungamento che permette all' esecutore di discendere facilmente con la mano sinistra fino alle note più acute.

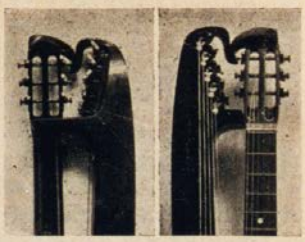


Fig. 4.

Anche la chitarra a 6 corde presenta all' esecutore la stessa comodità negli acuti. (fig. 5 e 6).

La vernice di tutti i miei istrumenti è di grosso spessore, di bel colore, trasparente e li rende impenetrabili dall' umidità e da altri elementi dannosi, accontentando nello stesso tempo l' occhio più difficile.

Concludendo: solidità, leggerezza, eleganza, intonazione intensità e dolcezza di suono sono i pregi che raccoman-

dano gl' istrumenti che escono dalla mia fabbrica e li fanno preferire a molti altri più imperfetti e più costosi.

Termino non senza accennare all'istrumento che meritamente è considerato il Re delle grandi orchestre teatrali : **" Il Violino ,,.**

I violini da me costruiti, mi lusingo abbiano a soddisfare anche l' artista più esigente, sia per la forza e dolcezza di voce, sia per la scelta accuratissima e ottima del legname, sia per la vernice di buona pasta e di grosso spessore e trasparente.

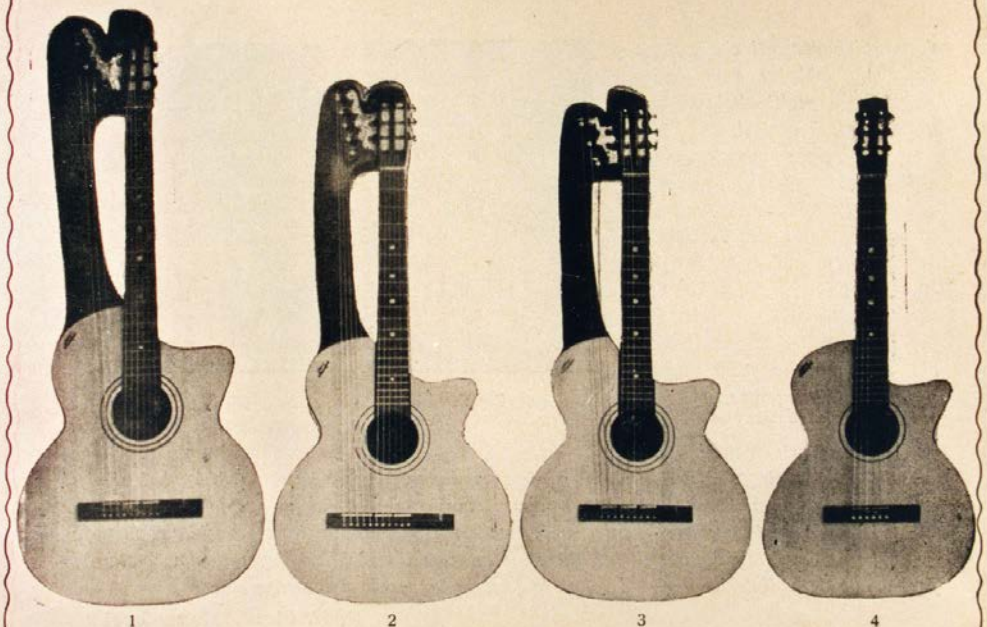
Fig. 5.

Fig. 6.

Sulla linea di questi istrumenti non è il caso di aggiungere altro poichè si tratta di oggetti veramente artistici il cui valore appare manifesto a qualunque occhio educato.

Spero e confido che queste note esplicative siano prese sulla debita considerazione e favorevolmente accolte da parte di intelligenti e interessati nonchè da quanti amano la non facile arte della liuteria oggi lodevolmente tornata in pregio e incoraggiata.

Prof. Mario Maccaferri



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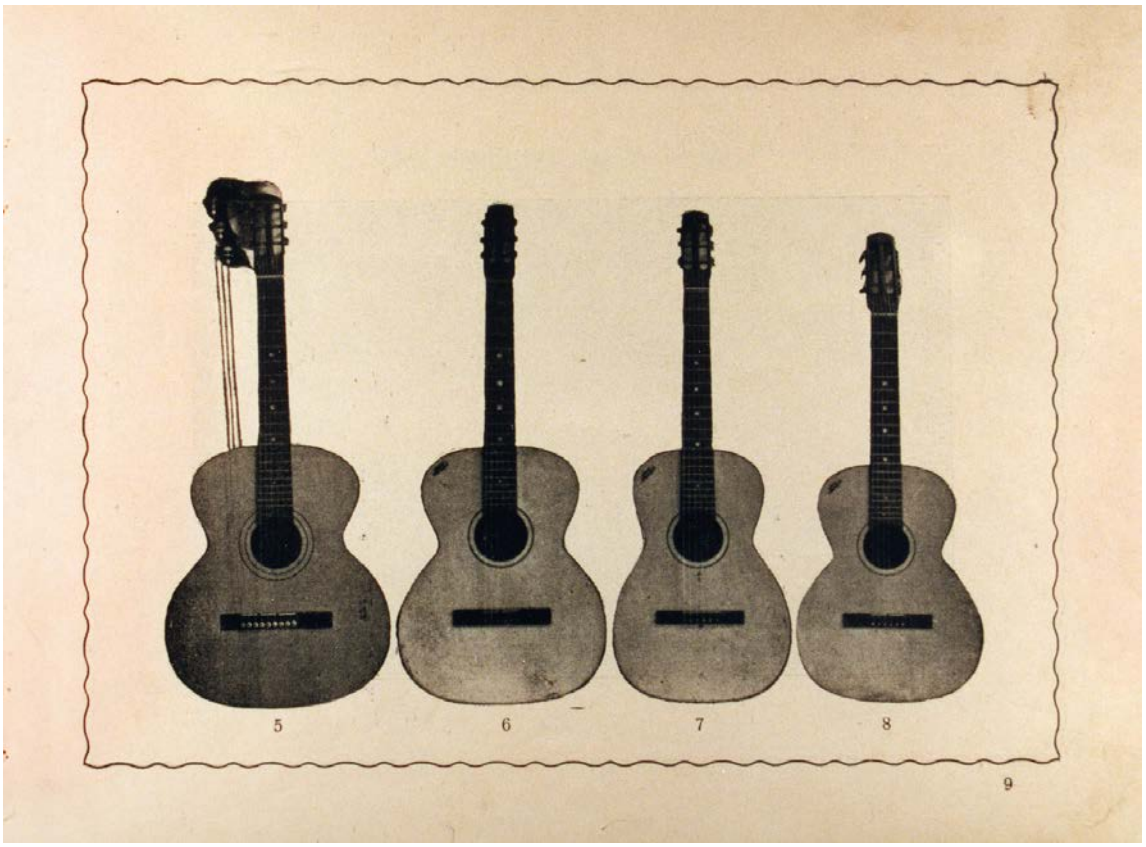
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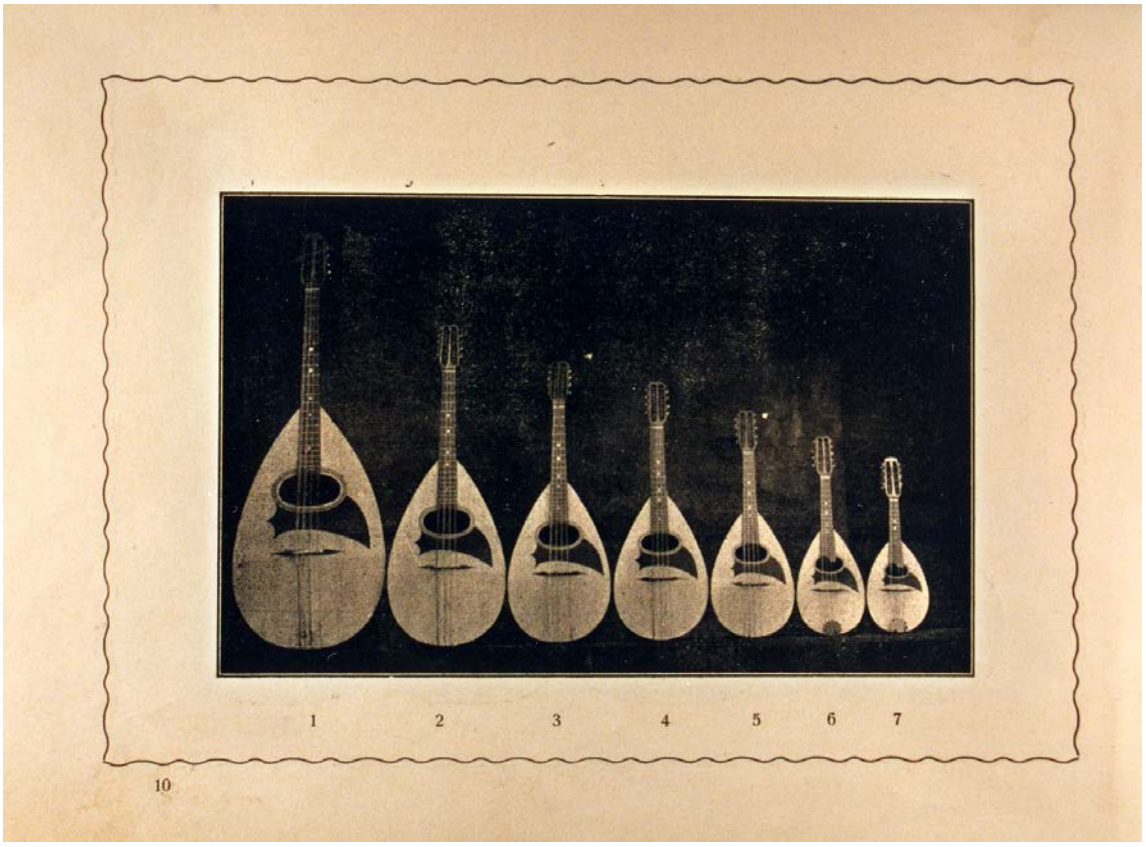
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Denominazione e Prezzi

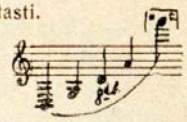
N. 1 — **Mandolone** a 8 corde - Fondo convesso - 20 tasti.

Accordatura

L. 450

N. 2. — **Mandoloncello** a 8 corde - Fondo convesso - 20 tasti.

Accordatura



L. 380

N. 3. — **Mandola baritono** (in *Si* ♭) - Fondo convesso scavato - 20 tasti.

L. 330

Accordatura

N. 4. — **Mandola tenore** (in *Sol*) - Fondo convesso scavato - 20 tasti.

L. 280

Accordatura

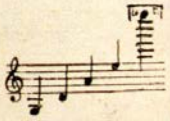
N. 5. — **Mandola soprano** (in *Do*) - Fondo convesso scavato - 20 tasti.

L. 260

Accordatura

N. 6. — **Mandolino** - Fondo convesso scavato - 24 tasti.

Accordatura



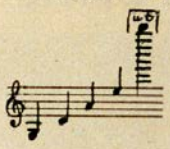
L. 200

11

N. 6². — **Mandolino** - Forma Capriccio 32 tasti.

L. 250

Accordatura



N. 7 — **Quartino** - Fondo convesso scavato 24 tasti.

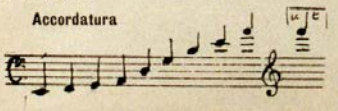
L. 200

Accordatura

I n. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 possono essere eseguiti a Forma Capriccio; in questo caso il prezzo viene aumentato del 10 %.

N. 1. — **Chitarrone** a 9 corde (quinta bassa). Serve molto nelle orchestre mandolinistiche e in complessi di chitarre. La cassa armonica è prolungata a sostegno manico con incavo per la discesa negli acuti. Il manico è smontabile. 20 tasti.

Accordatura



L. 700

N. 2. — **Chitarra** a 11 corde con cassa armonica prolungata a sostegno manico, con incavo per la discesa negli acuti. Il manico è smontabile - 24 tasti.

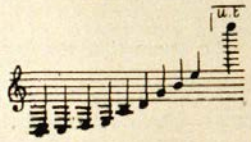
Accordatura

L. 700

12

N. 3. — **Chitarra** a 9 corde, specialissima per concertista solista; cassa armonica prolungata a sostegno manico con incavo per la discesa negli acuti. Il manico è smontabile - 24 tasti.

L. 650

Accordatura 

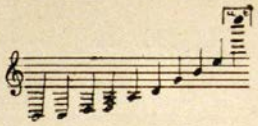
N. 4. — **Chitarra** a 6 corde speciale per concertista solista con incavo per la discesa negli acuti - 24 tasti.

L. 350

Accordatura 

N. 5. — **Chitarra** a 9 corde forma comune 20 tasti.

L. 390

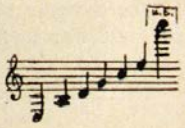
Accordatura 

Lo stesso tipo con incavo e 24 tasti

L. 460

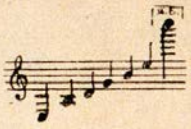
N. 6. — **Chitarra** a 6 corde forma comune 20 tasti.

L. 280

Accordatura 

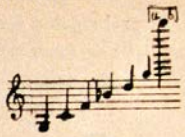
N. 7. — **Chitarra** a 6 corde forma spagnola piccola - 20 tasti.

L. 230

Accordatura 

N. 8. — **Chitarra terzino** a 6 corde forma comune - 20 tasti

L. 280

Accordatura 

Lo stesso tipo con incavo e 24 tasti

L. 320

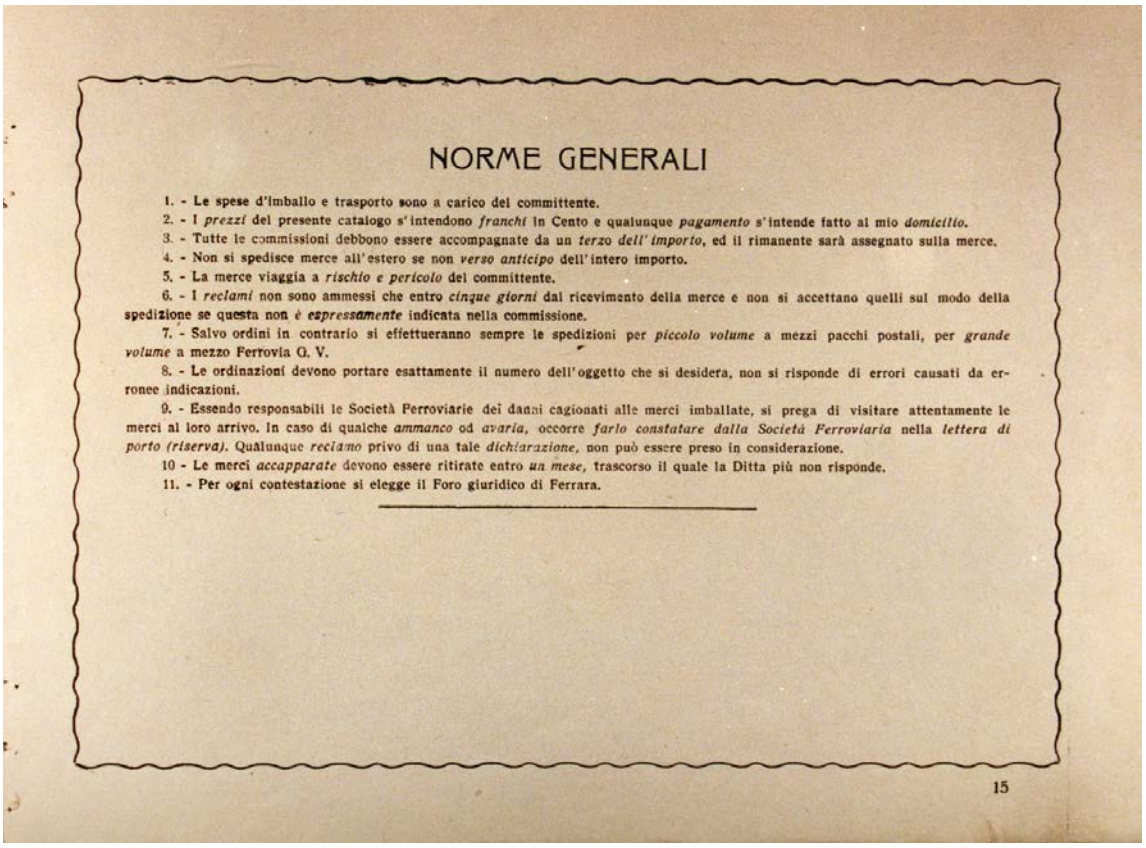
Violini L. 1300 - Viole L. 2000 - Violoncelli L. 3800

Tutti i miei istrumenti sono garantiti per 2 anni da ogni difetto di fabbricazione. Hanno la tastiera di ebano e i tasti di argentone a forma T. Sono tutti montati con meccaniche finissime.

Le orchestre mandolinistiche che si trovano in un numero non inferiore a 20 esecutori, che desiderano fornirsi completamente coi miei istumenti avranno il 30 % di sconto sui prezzi segnati.

Sconto del 30 % ai Rivenditori.

I prezzi del presente listino potranno essere variati.



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10 - Le merci *accapparate* devono essere ritirate entro *un mese*, trascorso il quale la Ditta più non risponde.
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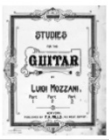
Chapter 7: Mozzani's Followers 	Chapter 8: Mozzani's Music 	Appendix 
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Maccaferri's U. S. Patent for the Selmer Soundbox

May 9, 1933. M. MACCAFERRI 1,908,613

STRINGED MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

Filed Feb. 16, 1932

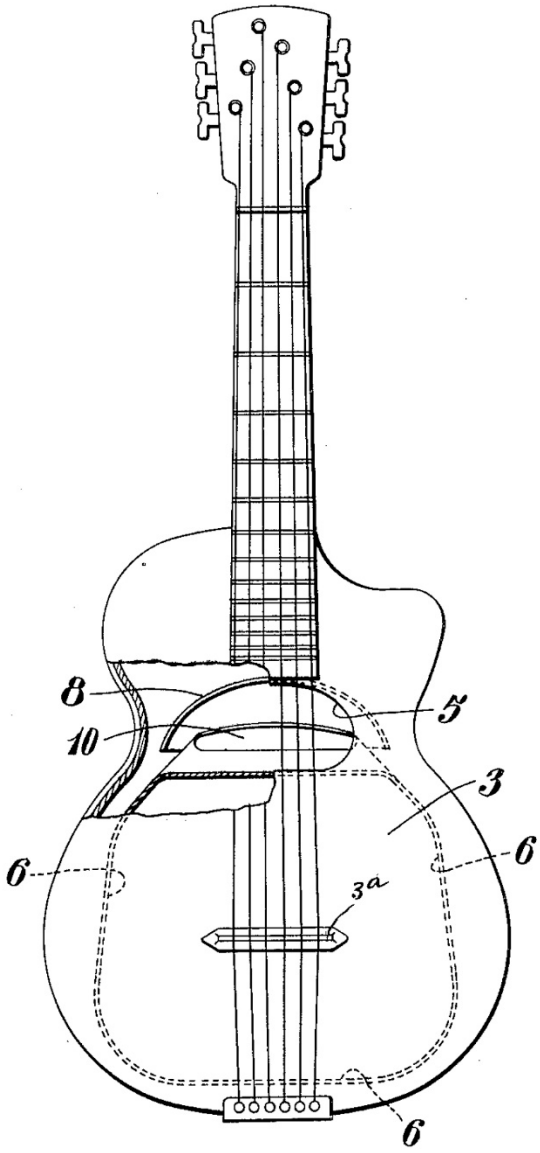


Fig. 1.

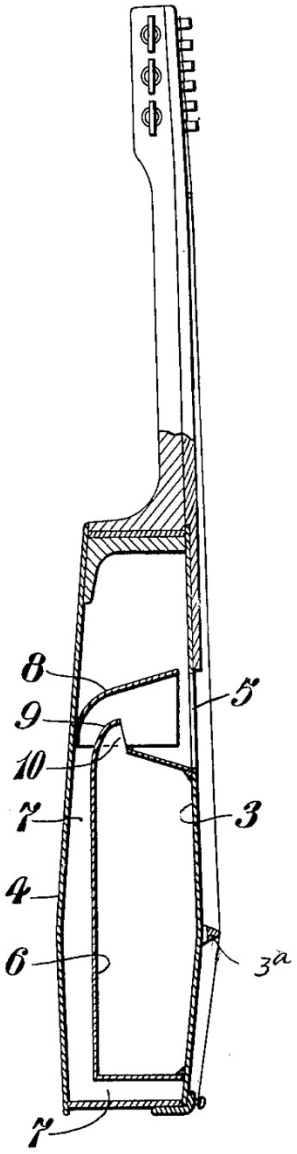


Fig. 2.

Inventor.
Mario Maccaferri

Patented May 9, 1933 1,908,613

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

MARIO MACCAFERRI, OF MANTES-LA-VILLE, FRANCE

STRINGED MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

Application filed February 16, 1932, Serial No. 593,269, and in Great Britain April 9, 1931.

This invention relates to stringed instruments having sounding boards or their equivalents, and particularly, although not exclusively, to guitars, violins, mandolins and other stringed instruments of a like nature, and has for its principal object to increase the volume of sound emitted by such instruments and to enhance the projecting or carrying power of the instruments and to improve their tone.

One object of the invention is to construct an improved musical instrument with an auxiliary sounding-box, chamber or the like located beneath the sounding board or harmonic or vibrating base or sounding board of the instrument so that the normal sounding-box, belly, or body of the instrument includes behind or within it an auxiliary sounding-box fixed to or integral with the sounding board, harmonic-table or the like.

Other objects of the invention relate to means for reflecting or directing the sound from the outer and inner sounding-boxes, chambers or the like along the channels or the line to openings, in the sounding board, so that the sound waves pass through the sound holes. These reflecting or directing means may have any suitable shape, for example they may be of cup shape or have double-curved walls, and in some cases the sound from one of the sounding-boxes may be directed in the opposite direction to the sound from the other sound-box.

In order that the invention may be better understood, it will now be described with reference to the accompanying drawing in which:—

Fig. 1 shows an elevation partly in section of a guitar-like musical instrument constructed according to the invention, and

Fig. 2 shows a side sectional elevation of Fig. 1, the same reference numbers thereon referring to like parts in the figures.

In the drawing, 3 is the sounding board of the main sounding-box or chamber 4 of the instrument which has the ordinary sound opening 5 therein. This sounding board is generally referred to as the harmonic member and embodies the bridge 3^a over which the strings pass under tension.

Beneath this harmonic-table or face-wall 3 is located a supplementary or auxiliary sounding-box or chamber 6 having the shape substantially as shown in Fig. 1, whereby a channel or space 7 is left around the sides and base of the said auxiliary box, or between its exterior and the interior of the normal sounding-box 4.

A curved reflector or director 8 is formed from a suitable piece and located to direct the sound from the space 7 to the opening 5.

The auxiliary sounding-box or chamber 6 has its base or side extended at 9 to form a curved reflector or directing part suitably located with relation to the reflector 8 so as to afford an opening leading into or towards the hole 5. By means of these reflectors the sound from the auxiliary sounding-box or chamber 6 is directed through the hole or opening 5.

It will be realized that other openings from the inner sounding-box or chamber to the exterior may be provided, for example the harmonic-table or face-wall may have openings therein, communicating directly with the interior of the said auxiliary sounding-box or chamber. In certain cases, however, it is preferred that the sound from the auxiliary sounding-chamber or box should be directed to the same sound opening or openings as those from the normal or main sounding-box or chamber.

Stiffening bars (not shown in the drawings) may be used in a well-known manner to keep the shaped parts from distortion.

Although the invention has been described as more particularly applied to a guitar-like instrument, it will be obvious that it may as readily be applied to instruments of the violin class.

In the case of a piano or banjo, the sounding-box may be arranged as in the guitar which is shown on the accompanying drawings, and this arrangement applies to all stringed instruments whatsoever.

Further, although the invention has been more particularly described with reference to main sounding-boxes or chambers, these boxes or chambers may be replaced by main sounding-boards or the like. For example,

in place of a closed main chamber, a main sounding-board may be used and in conjunction therewith, an inner chamber or box may be utilized in desired proximity to sound openings, where provided.

The invention is not limited to the precise forms or details of construction described, as these may be varied to suit particular cases.

What I claim and desire to secure by Letters Patent of the United States of America is:—

1. A stringed musical instrument comprising a box-like structure, one wall of which constitutes a sounding-board, a bridge on said wall, means for tensioning the strings over said bridge, an inner sounding-box secured to the under side of said sounding-board and of such a size as to leave a comparatively narrow channel around said inner sounding-box on three sides, an aperture on another side wall of said inner box and an aperture in the adjacent portion of said sounding-board.

2. A stringed musical instrument comprising a sounding-board, a bridge secured thereto over which the strings pass, an outer sounding-box associated with said sounding-board, an inner sounding box carried by said sounding-board within said outer sounding-box, apertures in said inner and outer sounding-boxes and reflecting means within the outer sounding box located so as to direct the sound emanating from the inner sounding-box to the outside of the instrument.

3. A stringed musical instrument comprising inner and outer sounding-boxes arranged one within the other, a bridge on the outer face wall of the outer sounding-box over which the strings pass, an aperture in the side wall of the inner sounding-box leading into the outer box, a reflector within the outer sounding box opposite said aperture and an aperture in said outer face wall through which the sound passes to the outside of the instrument.

4. A stringed musical instrument comprising inner and outer sounding-boxes, the former of broadly four sided form and of such a size as to leave a channel-like space between itself and the outer sounding-box on three sides, an aperture across the fourth side of said inner sounding-box, a curved reflector within the outer sounding box and opposite said aperture, a bridge fixed to one face wall of the outer sounding-box and an aperture in said face wall opposite said curved reflector.

5. A stringed musical instrument comprising a sounding-board, a bridge fixed to said sounding-board over which the strings pass, an outer sounding-box associated with said sounding-board and of which the latter forms one wall, an inner sounding-box of dish form secured under said sounding-board so that the latter forms one wall of said inner sounding-box, a comparatively long and narrow aperture near the lower portion of one side wall of said inner sounding-box, a curved reflector element surrounding said aperture formed by a projecting lip on said inner sounding-box, a separate curved reflector opposite said aperture and an aperture in the sounding-board opposite said separate curved reflector.

6. The combination with a musical instrument having several strings stretched between a tensioning device and a bridge, of a sounding board, an outer sounding-box one wall of which is comprised by said board, an inner sounding-box of dish form secured under said sounding board so that the latter forms one wall of said inner box, said inner box having four main sides three of which lie comparatively close to the outer box, an aperture on the fourth side of said box extending along the lower edge of said side, an extended lip on the under face wall of said inner box with a curved forward portion, an aperture in the sounding-board near the aperture in the inner box and a reflector within the outer sounding box to direct the sound leaving the inner box to the aperture in the sounding board.

7. A stringed musical instrument comprising inner and outer sounding-boxes, means for supporting and tensioning the instrument strings, a bridge over which the strings pass and by which the vibrations of the strings are communicated to said sounding-boxes, an aperture in the inner sounding-box leading into the outer sounding-box, a further aperture in the latter box and a reflector disposed to direct the sound leaving the inner sounding box to the outside of the instrument.

In witness whereof I affix my signature.

MARIO MACCAFERRI.

2015 Interview with John Monteleone by Daniel Wheeldon

(link to Internet article)

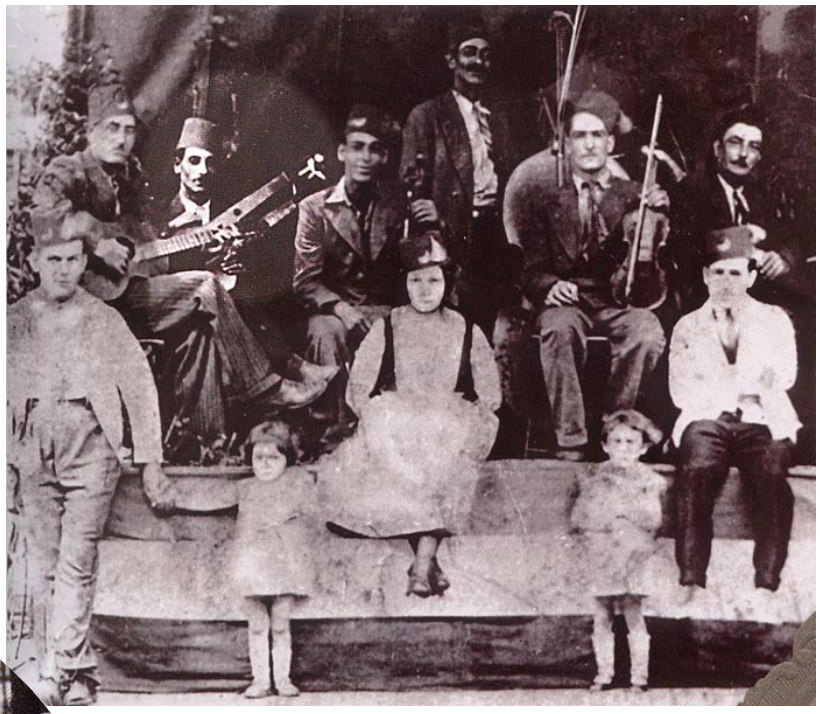
A wonderful 3-part AMIS blog series of Daniel Wheeldon's interview with John Monteleone, who had a long and fascinating friendship with Mario in in his last decade. His stories and memories are full of surprises and paint an even richer picture of Maccaferri. I did note one significant paragraph in the interview that seems to be misremembered and misstated – implying that the resonator and D-hole guitar was in response to being asked to create a jazz guitar for Selmer. However, the D-holes were originally gut-strung classical instruments, with Maccaferri's experimentation begun long before his introduction to Henri Selmer.

Mario Maccaferri and John Monteleone working on Mario's new classical guitar

Harp Guitars and…*Django?!*

Contrary to popular belief, Maccaferri himself never met Reinhardt, and in fact, was largely unaware of Django's music, being immersed in the classical repertoire and not Django's Gypsy jazz. The steel-string Selmer guitars were the Company's idea, not Maccaferri's, who remained a gut/nylon-string player his entire life. How about Django? Was he aware of the behind-the-scenes creator of his favorite guitars, or remotely interested in the harp guitar? It's doubtful. And yet Django was probably no stranger to harp guitars.

According to Michael Dregni in *Django Reinhardt and the Illustrated History of Gypsy Jazz*, Django's father – Jean Eugene Weiss – led an "Orchestre" made up of his brothers, one of whom who holds an unknown hollow-arm harp guitar (at right; Jean is sitting at piano at right). A young Django and his mother re-connected with his father at this time, so it's tempting to imagine the youngster picking up that unusual guitar after putting down his own banjo.



Perhaps more intriguing in the Django story is Jean "Poulette" Castro, known among his fellow Paris Romany as "Le Grand Gitan." Dregni states that Poulette taught young Gypsy players - including Django - the art of playing steel-string guitars with a plectrum, with the hand loose and free off the soundboard. And yet, Poulette is seen at left with a harp guitar with 2 or 3 floating basses. Did someone hand him a "prop" harp guitar for this publicity shot?...or did he play it? Dregni doesn't know either, but would guess that he played it. A fast-picking plectrum Gypsy jazz harp guitarist would certainly be something to see!

Acknowledgements

This ongoing Maccaferri harp guitar story and archive exists through the good graces of *many* guitar friends around the world. I simply could not have done it without them. Along with the bibliography, they also represent my sources.

I must start with very special thanks to Michael Wright for graciously and generously donating scans from his Maccaferri chapter in *Guitar Stories Vol II* along with numerous other images from Maccaferri's own archives through his widow Maria. Then there are the indispensable book authors who have shared information and allowed use of their images over the years: Giovanni Intelisano, Lorenzo Frignani, François Charle and Jeremy Tubbs.

My deepest appreciation goes out to the late Jim Forderer for allowing me access to, and ultimately purchase of, his original Maccaferri and Mozzani harp guitars.

Many thanks to the following individuals who provided critical help, whether images or information (and often both): Roger Belloni, Simona Boni, Ben Cardew, Michael Dregni, Bill Fiorella, Reinaldo Franchiolo, Kermit Goodman, Michael Horowitz, Darcy Kuronen, Eliane Maccaferri Reese, Armando Marcucci, Benoit Meulle-Stef, Massimo Milan, Lukas Milani, John Monteleone, Randy Osborne, Peter Penhallow, Giulio Sanguiradi, Michael Simmons, Sinier de Ridder, John Thomas, Jeremy Tubbs, and James Westbrook.

Thanks also go to the following friends who are sadly no longer with us: Giorgio Ferraris, Franco Ghisalberti, Paul Hostetter and Alessandro Maccaferri.

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Image Credits

- *Mario Maccaferri: a luthier in Cento, Paris and New York:* 3 left
- Maria Maccaferri/Michael Wright: 3 right, 9 right, 10, 11 top, 18 left, 19, 25 lower right, 26, 27 top, 31 left, 34-37, 70 top left & right, 76 bottom left & right, 77 left, 78-93
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- Michael Dregni: 99

About The Author: Creator and Editor of Harpguitars.net Gregg Miner has been fascinated by harp guitars since the early 1970s. He purchased his first instrument (a 1916 red sunburst Gibson) in 1983, then fell in love with the harp guitars of Chris Knutsen when he found his first one in 1988. He collects harp guitars, researches harp guitars, writes about harp guitars, plays harp guitars, produces harp guitar CDs, buys and sells harp guitars, and runs Harpguitars.net, Harp Guitar Music and the Harp Guitar Foundation. You would think that by now he would be sick of harp guitars, but he is not.