

taking the role of master of ceremonies, kept the proceedings light. Perhaps a bit too light. "We read a survey in the local paper," he said, "which said that of a few hundred people surveyed, one hundred percent claimed they did not like chamber music."

Titters of laughter from the crowd.

"Of course," he went on, "there was a few percent margin for error."



**ITALIAN SMILES:** Vittorio Clemente from Bogaro & Clemente, Marta Rivolta, Silvio Levaggi, and Andrea Rivolta celebrate victory.

#### ZERO HOUR

The Friday awards banquet, casual and elegant, held a few surprises for the crowd: In the violin category, several certificates of merit and silver medals were given out for both tone and workmanship, but no gold; this elicited an astonished inhalation from the full-to-brimming hall. When the same thing happened in the viola category, the gasp was louder, causing Helen M. Hayes—president of the VSA and moderator of the proceedings—to urge, "OK, people, moving on."

When Raymond Schryer of Ontario, Canada, was awarded the gold medal for his cello, relief fell on the room. "It doesn't mean there aren't good violins or exciting young makers," said luthier Gary DiCarlo of Detroit. "It just means that there wasn't *that* one that was extra special. This has happened before."

I was told by many that this generation of young instrument makers is an open and exciting one—that, where once techniques and trade secrets might have been jealously guarded, these young prodigies are more willing to share ideas with one another.

Among the participants, many agreed it was the best competition ever—the results were both unpredictable (many do keep score and root for their favorites) and satisfying. Raymond Schryer agreed that the 2002 convention was characterized by lots of interest in the instruments—and there was a lot of interest in his own creations. Schryer's cello prize was his first VSA gold medal, and he captured silver medals in the viola and



**OLE'S ORO:** Ole Kanestrom's gold-medal-winning viola bow.

quartet categories as well. "I even sold the quartet," he says with a smile. "For me, the competition has been a violin maker's dream." For those there to watch and learn, it was an educational experience all around.

"If you still have room," Helen Hayes announced, "Marina Kun of Kun Shoulder Rest is sponsoring a breakfast tomorrow morning."

Given the amount of food and attention these luthiers and vendors enjoyed in the few short days, it seemed doubtful that many attended. But then again . . .

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