



Martin & Schatz Cittern-shaped Guitar, c. 1836

Date

c. 1836

Primary Maker

C.F. Martin Sr.

Medium

ivory

Description

This circa 1835 Martin & Schatz acoustic guitar is one of the few still existing instruments from guitar manufacturer Martin's first decade in production. The body shape of this guitar is unique among Martin instruments, perhaps influenced by the contemporary English cittern. The curled headstock shape is also distinctive and complete with Viennese "one side screw" tuning machines, typical of the ones used by Martin from 1834 to the 1850s. The metal back of the headstock/tuning machine assemblage is ornately engraved, and unique to this instrument. Some elements of note: the bridge on this guitar is called a "shield" bridge, the earliest example of this on a Martin guitar. The middle two string pins are slightly lower than the others, a typical feature of this type of bridge. Martin called the ivory decoration beneath the bridge a "flower" or "ornament." The soundhole decoration with Eichenlaub ("oak leaves") inlays is typical of early Martins. The top purfling around the guitar body from the Burdorf company in Hamburg and imported by Martin for use in his instruments. The inlays on the fingerboard and headstock do not appear to be original. C.F. Martin & Company, as the manufacturer is known today, is a leading producer of quality flat top acoustic guitars. Christian Frederick Martin (1796 – 1873) was a German-born luthier who moved to the United States in 1833 and began producing stringed instruments in New York City soon after. His design innovations, including interior x-bracing and the neck-body dovetail joint, would make Martin instruments synonymous with quality.

Dimensions

Overall (HWD) (overall): 10 3/16 x 91 3/16 x 29 3/16 in. (25.908 x 231.648 x 74.168 cm)