

Early Violin Making in Mittenwald

In 1294 Bishop Emicho of Freising purchased Mittenwald and Partenkirchen from Count Berthold II of Eschenlohe, having already acquired Garmisch earlier in 1249. From that time onwards the entire county of Werdenfels was owned by the Bishopric of Freising and only became part of the Electorate of Bavaria after secularisation in 1803. Mittenwald was situated on the much travelled 'Rottstrasse' with its regional transport rights and tolls – formerly the Via Raetia used by Roman troops – that connected Italy via the Brenner Pass to Augsburg and Nuremberg. In addition, rafts could be used on the river Isar from Mittenwald and regularly made the journey to Munich and Landshut. Transportation on water and land was extremely well organised in this region. In 1492 Duke Albert IV ordered a road to be built over the Kesselberg mountain pass north of Mittenwald to shorten the trade route between Venice and Munich. In the barren Isar valley most local people had smallholdings that provided a meagre subsistence. Some 20% of Mittenwald's residents were small traders or part of the local system that governed the organisation of transport and the storage of goods through its territories and levied tolls. As a result, Mittenwald had evolved into a wealthy village. In the church registers it is particularly noticeable that Mittenwald had a higher-than-average number of bakers who ensured that merchants and waggoners passing through had enough to eat.

Mathias Kloz, the Founder of Violin Making in Mittenwald

At this politically and economically particularly stable time **Mathias Kloz (1653 - 1743)** was born. His life and work, however, can only be traced through a few documents and instruments. To date, the earliest known instrument made by Kloz is a viola from 1704 with an original label and easily legible date.



The oldest document to have survived in which he is mentioned is a reference, issued on 10 May 1678 in Padua, in which it is confirmed that Mathias Kloz of Mittenwald worked for six years 'with utter honourableness and loyalty' as an apprentice in the lute workshop 'al Santo'.¹

¹ Employment reference in the possession of the Museumsgesellschaft Mittenwald; cf. essay by Wolfgang Zunterer on the website of the Geigenbaumuseum Mittenwald.

Mathias Kloz's name is mentioned several times in documents related to Venetian violin and lute making from the 17th and 18th centuries. In 1672 he was recommended to Peter Railich, who ran the lute workshop 'al Santo' in Padua, by Christoph Kloz, who was possibly a distant relative.² Christoph Kloz was an ivory sculptor in Venice who worked together with a number of lute makers. He was born between 1626 and 1630 in the Innsbruck area, the son of a certain Georg Kloz. Whether Georg Kloz was originally from Mittenwald cannot be verified as church records only exist from 1615 onwards. The name Kloz is also to be found in the Leutasch valley in Tyrol, not far from Mittenwald. In the 17th century a large section of the Leutasch formed a local rural district administered by Innsbruck.

What is certainly interesting is that Christoph Kloz knew the luthiers Matthias Kaiser, Michael Straub, Peter Railich, Mathias Sellas and Jacob Rehm very well. They had all gone to Venice as lute makers at the beginning of the 17th century from the Füssen area of Germany and carried on working according to the rigidly hierarchical rules of the lute makers' guild of Füssen. The nineteen-year-old Mathias Kloz first worked to these rules in 1672 at Peter Railich's who had, by that time, moved to Padua. Padua had very closely ties with Venice during this period and Italy's most important lute making workshops were to be found in these two cities.

In the reference letter of 1678 written by his employer Peter Railich, Mathias Kloz is referred to as a fellow member of the guild and not as an apprentice. This means that he had already completed his training as a lute maker. In his chronicle³ of Mittenwald of 1880 Josef Baader writes that the young Mathias Kloz was sent to Cremona to train under Nicola Amati.

Even if this statement is treated with due caution, it is however certainly possible that Mathias Kloz was sent to a lute maker in the north of Italy as a thirteen or fourteen-year-old. Thanks to the intervention of Christoph Kloz he may well have then gone to Padua to the famous lute maker Peter Railich. After working there for six years Mathias Kloz was given the following reference in Italian and Latin:

² Stefano Pio: *Violin and Lute makers of Venice 1640-1760*, Venedig 2004.

³ Josef Baader, *Chronik des Marktes Mittenwald*, Mittenwald 1880, p. 192 f. Josef Baader of Mittenwald (1812 Mittenwald–1884 Munich) was a historian and archivist (incl. at the Nürnberger Staatsarchiv and the Münchner Reichsarchiv).

Laus Deo Adi. 10 Maggio. 1678. Paduoa

Praise be to God in the year of our Lord 10 May 1678, Padua

Attesto io sottoscritto con mio Giuramento à chiunque si sia, come

I, the undersigned, testify on oath to all, including

À Mattio Cloz dá Mithbolt hà servito per Gargione et operò nella mia

Mathias Kloz from Mittenwald, that he served as an apprentice in my

Bottega di Lautaro al Santo il corso d`anni sei con tutta honoreulolez -

lute workshop al Santo for six years, working with utter honourableness

za e fedeltà et hauersi dimostrato sempre puntuale obbidiente e mo-

and loyalty, always punctual, obedient and

rigerato ne in conto alcuno hauer deturpato i termini della propria

modest and did nothing in any way to damage his good reputation

reputazione, e decoro anzi reso sempre esemplare nelle sue opere

and, in addition and in all confidence, I acknowledge that the work he performed

et attioni in fede di che

and his manner were always exemplary.

The next known document relating to Mathias Kloz is a letter dated 4 February 1686 on the occasion of his marriage to the weaver's daughter Maria Seiz. In it, the bride's father transfers the deeds of a property to the young couple:

“Settlement and respective transfer on 4 February 1686

On this day, the honourable and respected citizen and widower Michael Seiz,

a resident here, does declare and transfer to his kind and dear

son-in-law, Mathias Kloz, a citizen and lute maker, also resident here,

to Maria, his wedded housewife, and to all their heirs, companions and descendants,

the selfsame dwelling in his possession, as well as a little garden directly adjoining,

with all rights and powers as he had owned previously and occupied peaceably [...].”⁴

This house then became the first instrument maker's workshop in Mittenwald.

As in all earlier documents Mathias Kloz is described as a 'lute maker' in the deeds. This was the name that his house was then known by and was passed down to his sons and grandchildren as, presumably, Mathias Kloz largely made lutes initially in Mittenwald and sold these to music shops in northern Italy. It was easier for him to supply unsigned instruments to an established merchant than laboriously build up his own customer base. In the late 17th century, in the years to follow, the demand for lutes dropped considerably and, in their place, a continuous interest in violins grew instead.

⁴ Bay HStA, Briefprotokolle 185, fol. 17–18.

For the time between 1678, when Mathias Kloz left Railich's workshop, up until his wedding in Mittenwald in 1686, there is no documentary evidence of what Kloz did. Returning to Mittenwald, however, would have brought many advantages with it: there were no guilds to impose any restrictions here unlike in many other towns and cities, and transport and trade were very well organised. Many residents of Mittenwald were actively involved in regional trade with a number supplying distant markets both to the south and north. The 'Rott' system ensured the reliable transport of goods throughout Europe. In addition, there was sufficient wood of good quality in the immediate vicinity for Kloz to make his instruments and, as a result, he was not dependent on timber merchants.

It is not known when and where Mathias Kloz received his instruction in violin making. His violins and violas were built using the Cremona construction technique, i.e. the rib was made using an inside mold and the neck and top block were made in two parts fixed with a nail. Stylistically, however, his instruments have little other in common with the Cremona type of violin.

The first violin maker north of the Alps to produce instruments in the Cremona style was Jacob Stainer of Absam, near Innsbruck (Tyrol), around 1650. Although Absam and Mittenwald are not far apart, there are no similarities either stylistically or in the construction techniques used between the violins made by Mathias Kloz and those by Jacob Stainer. It is, therefore, highly unlikely that Mathias Kloz ever worked at the famous Absam violin maker's and there are also no written records that suggest this. It is, however, possible that Mathias Kloz knew Stainer's violins.

The well-known violin maker Johannes Schorn of Salzburg also produced instruments using the Cremona construction technique.⁵ One counter-example is Rudolph Höß who worked as a violin maker in Munich from 1682 onwards. A letter of application of his that has survived to this day states that he worked as a lute maker in famous workshops in Italy for a number of years.⁶ Three violins and violas he made in Munich after 1682 and which bear his label,⁷ however, are not in keeping with the Cremona style, exhibiting instead the clear constructional details of minstrel-type instruments. Mitre joints are used to connect the ribs at the corners and the plateau under the plug at its base shows that the original neck and top block were made from one piece of wood. Höß obviously learnt the art of violin making after returning from Italy using the traditional construction method of the time north of the Alps, as also frequently found in England and France. Even in Turin, violin making in the 17th century by instrument makers such as Hans Angerer who had emigrated from Füssen and by his successor Enrico Catenar (Heinrich Casner) was still clearly influenced by the minstrel tradition. Most violin makers working in towns in Germany before 1700 were not familiar with the Cremona construction technique and their instruments reveal distinct minstrel characteristics. This form of instrument was even prevalent in Saxony and Bohemia until after 1800.

⁵ cf. Photoarchiv Wolfgang Zunterer.

⁶ Adolf Layer, *Die Allgäuer Lauten- und Geigenmacher. Ein Kapitel schwäbischer Kulturleistung für Europa*, Augsburg 1978, p. 145 f..

⁷ cf. Photoarchiv Wolfgang Zunterer.

It can safely be assumed that Mathias Kloz was already working mainly on violins by the time his first pupil Andreas Jais and his own son, Georg, started their apprenticeships – i.e. by 1700 at the latest. By making his violins and violas using the Cremona construction technique he was a very modern violin maker for his time and was successful thanks to the high quality of his instruments. Nevertheless, no instruments bearing his signature dating from before 1704 are known to date.

Violin makers working in urban centres regularly labelled their violins as they were in direct contact with musicians and wanted to strengthen ties with their customers and advertise their work. Even after he had switched largely from making lutes to violins, Mathias Kloz presumably sold his instruments as before without labels, primarily through established business contacts with dealers and music shops who may possibly even have ordered unsigned instruments.

On 20 May 1702 Mathias Kloz was in Padua again to have his employer's reference of 1678 certified by a notary. A bill of sale dated 13 May 1702 reveals that he had been in Mittenwald on that date.⁸ The journey to Padua that he undertook immediately afterwards would have taken seven days, covering a distance of some thirty miles a day. Why did Mathias Kloz embark on this strenuous trip to Padua to obtain this attestation?

No definitive answer can be given – merely a hypothetical one.⁹ When Mathias Kloz finished working for Peter Railich in 1678 he would have been given a standard letter of reference with the seal P.R. and Railich's signature.

It is possible that, due to some unfortunate circumstance or other, this reference had been damaged. By 1702 the first two apprentices were working at Mathias Kloz's, taking a five-year training in the tradition of the Füssen lute makers' guild, as he himself had been trained by Railich, among others. Kloz would have wanted to have a representative certificate for his apprentices and everyone else in Mittenwald that showed where and under whom he himself had completed his training.

Kloz had this magnificent document drawn up in Padua in 1702 to which the text from his original letter of reference was added. The original seal was also fixed to the document. Peter Railich's son, Johannes, confirmed that the text and seal were from his father. The certificate was legally attested by a notary in Padua on 20 May 1702 in the presence of two other witnesses.

⁸ Bay HStA, Briefprotokolle 185, n.p.

⁹ For the reasoning behind this hypothesis see 'Arbeitszeugnis von Mathias Kloz' by Wolfgang Zunterer on the website of the Geigebaumuseum Mittenwald.

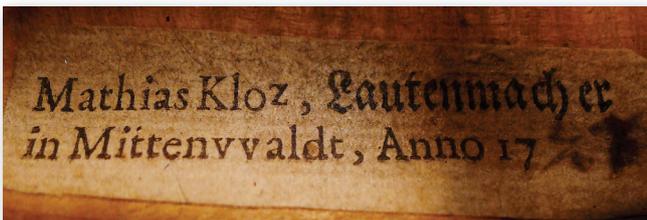
Other important written documents include the labels inside the instruments made by Mathias Kloz. There are handwritten labels and two types of printed label that he used:



Label no. 1 written by hand:
Mathias Khloz Lauttenmacher
Zu Müttenwaldt Ao 1704



Label no. 2 is printed using the 'Fraktur' typeface:
Mathias Khlotz Lautenmacher
In Mittenwaldt Anno 1714
Here, Kloz is written Khlotz. This type of label can be found in instruments made between 1712 and 1715.



Label no. 3 is printed using the 'Antiqua' typeface:
Mathias Kloz, Lautenmacher
In Mittenwaldt, Anno 1714 .
Here Kloz is written without an 'h' and 't'. The word 'Lautenmacher' (lute maker) was kept in the 'Fraktur' typeface. This type of label can also be found in instruments made between 1712 and 1715.

Only two copies of a third type of printed label are known. One is on a notice board here in the museum. The other one was fixed to the inside of a violin at a later date, as dendrochronological tests have proven. It reads:



This label is mostly set using the 'Antiqua' typeface with the words 'Lauten-und Geigenmacher' (lute and violin maker) in 'Fraktur'.
In the case of this label it is uncertain whether Mathias Kloz had it printed himself or if it is of a later date.

Many documents exist from 1686 onwards that were written by the village clerk at that time in connection with Mathias Kloz, who had obviously become both well established in Mittenwald and successful. These include records about the sale and purchase of a house, parcels of land and fields. The clerk wrote a description of the property, the names of the neighbours on either side, followed by the purchaser and the vendor and the price of the house. At that time there were no street names or house numbers.



As already mentioned, Mathias Kloz built his violins and violas using an inside mold. For now there are known five violas made by him, dated between 1704 and 1722 that, judging by their dimensions, could have been built using the same inside mold. The length of the main body of the instruments varies between 41cm and 41.2 cm; their width also only varies by a maximum of 2 mm. The internal construction includes blocks made of spruce. The pointed spruce rib ring is let into the corner blocks.

Overall the interior is only executed very perfunctorily. The curvature extends across the whole width and the top and bottom plates curve evenly to the edges. As a result the curvature does not appear bulbous in any way.

Viola, Mathias Kloz, 1715

The execution of the edges of his instruments is generally sturdy, i.e. with slightly deeper bevelling around the edges, thicker linings and a slightly bulging curve, also familiar from the work of Füssen violin makers who had emigrated, such as Georg Aman and Gregori Wenger from Augsburg, Johannes Schorn from Salzburg and Martin Mathias Fichtl from Vienna, to mention but a few. The round f-holes have straight-cut edges through the arching. In the case of the violas, the peg boxes are long and terminate in rounded scrolls. The varnish is of a browny-orange colour and of a sound texture over a clear undercoat. The stylistic characteristics of these instruments match those of the Füssen School at that time.

Mathias Kloz was one of the first viola d'amore makers to use resonance strings based on the instruments of Johannes Schorn. A total of twelve viole d'amore made by members of the Kloz family between 1712 and 1749 are known.

Mathias Kloz's sons

There is very little written information about **Georg Kloz**, the eldest son. He was born in 1687 and married Anna Sprenger in 1715. He died in 1737.



Violin, Georg Kloz, 1724

Instruments with his handwritten labels exist from 1722 onwards. All his instruments are characterised by their high-quality craftsmanship and detailing. From their appearance his violins and violas have little in common with those of his father. Generally speaking, his work was clearly based on the large Amati model (see photo of violin from 1724), with flat edge profiles and extended curvature bevelling.

There are no pins on the back of either his violins or violas. The lining on the back at the bottom and top is almost completely straight and a little more obvious than with Stainer's instruments. He used a clear undercoat with a clean, light and slightly brownish colouring that frequently appears matte. The varnish, applied rather thickly, is an orange-brown, sometimes tending towards a reddish brown.

Only in the case of his late violin from 1737 does the ground look as if it is stained and the coloured varnish seems darker than it really is. His scrolls are the most uniform of his elements, regardless of whether Stainer or Amati models. A traditional spruce rib ring with spruce blocks lines the inside of his instruments. Several of his violins, however, have a hardwood ring, possibly of willow or lime.

Through his very individual working method we can be certain that several instruments with printed Stainer or Amati labels were actually made by Georg Kloz.

Otherwise, his instruments normally come with a handwritten label. The first type of label from between 1722 and 1725 is known from five different instruments. It would appear that he took over the wording 'mea propria manu' (by my own hand) from the Stainer label:



Ego georgius Klotz mea
propria manu feci in
Mittenwald a° 1725

The second known handwritten type of label dates from between 1732 and 1737:



Giorgio Klotz propria
Manu feci in Mittenwald a 1732

Two other printed violin labels that have survived and are now in a label collection in the USA, reveal that Georg Klotz and a certain Nicolo Bruno shared a business in Bologna. The labels are dated 1726 and 1727. Unfortunately the matching violins from which these labels were taken are not known. Another violin with this Bologna label dated 1729 is mentioned by Walter Senn.¹⁰ It would appear that this business association only lasted a brief period.



Nicolo Bruno e Giorgio Klotz
nella Strada delli Maestri di Legnara
In Bologna 1727

Georg Klotz died in 1737 in Mittenwald. As he had taken on Johannes Augustin Gäßler, who was related to the Bader's, as an apprentice in 1736, Klotz presumably died quite unexpectedly.¹¹

¹⁰ Walter Senn, *Aus dem Kulturleben einer süddeutschen Kleinstadt*, Innsbruck, Vienna, Munich 1938, p. 358.

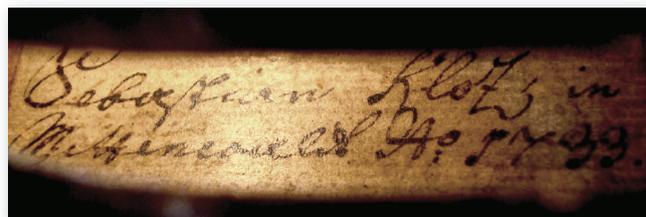
¹¹ cf. Adolf Layer, *Matthias Klotz von Mittenwald. Ein berühmter Geigenbauer der Barockzeit*, Munich 1959, p. 26

Sebastian Kloz (1696 - 1775), Mathias Kloz's second son, has always been considered the best violin maker in the family. He most probably started as an apprentice at his father's around 1710. The next written record in which he is mentioned is connected with his marriage in Mittenwald in 1724 to Rosina Mayr from Rovereto. Part of the building at Stainergasse 33 was transferred to the young couple's name and it was here that he set up the first violin workshop of his own.¹² From around 1730 onwards he lived in Hochstrasse.¹³



Violin, Sebastian Kloz, 173?

The two earliest known violins by Sebastian Kloz date from between 1720 and 1725 and have the labels of Stainer models. From this early period working on his own, large Amati models with long coins and handwritten labels are also known.



Sebastian Kloz, 1733

The lining along the very flat bevelling around the edge extends right into the corner points. The bulky scrolls have wide upper sections; the spirals are often round or slightly oval. The ends of the f-holes are not round as with Stainer's instruments but slightly oval too. The narrow, lower f-hole slit converges.

The varnished finish differs greatly from other known Mittenwald violins made after 1750. A largely reddy-orange coloured varnish has been applied over a very clear, shiny ground. It seems quite thick, is slightly translucent and of a good intensity. The undercoat of some violins is a little darker with a matte sheen. As a result the overall appearance of the varnish is distinctly less attractive.

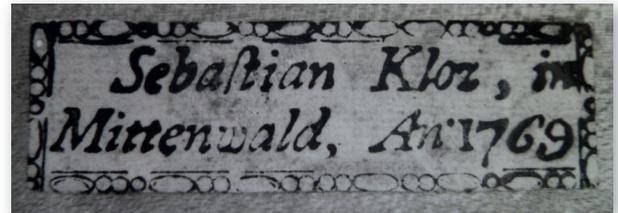
¹² Richard Pesl, *Das Mittenwalder Häuserbuch*, Mittenwald 2004, p. 292.

¹³ From manuscripts in the Marktarchiv Mittenwald, summarised by Helmut W. Klinner, tax registers 1727–1733, nos. 61 ff.

A total of nine labels handwritten by Sebastian Kloz have been found in instruments to date. The earliest is from 1726, the latest from 1740. The others are from between 1733 and 1737. Printed labels from 1750 onwards also exist. The 'vv' in Mittenwald became a 'w' after 1758. Sebastian Kloz also used Stainer and Amati labels to mark models. However, this does not mean that every Mittenwald violin that is similar to a Kloz model but with a label from Stainer or Amati was actually made by Sebastian Kloz.



Sebastian Kloz, 1750



Sebastian Kloz, 1769

In 1968 a very beautiful violin bearing a label from Johannes Jais of Bolzano came up for auction at Sotheby's in London. A number of acknowledged authorities on old violins at that time inspected the instrument.

This very individual model with a lovely reddish-orange varnish had occasionally been seen before but generally with an Amati label. All the experts were pleased to have been finally able to identify these beautiful violins. Nobody doubted their attribution even though the label was a facsimile and no other instrument of this type with an original label from Johannes Jais was known. This verdict gained a momentum of its own and all auctioneers in London, Paris and New York ascribed this violin model to Johannes Jais or his school. I was also convinced that this attribution was correct.¹⁴

Many years later, the error made in 1968 finally came to light thanks to a violin of exactly this type with a handwritten, original label from Sebastian Kloz which had not become unstuck.¹⁵ When several other violins surfaced with the same labels from Sebastian Kloz it became evident that this violin was to be attributed to an earlier, previously unknown period in Sebastian Kloz's oeuvre.

A tax book from Mittenwald of 1733 shows that Mathias, Georg and Sebastian Kloz all worked independently with each being taxed individually. After the death of his elder brother Georg in 1737, Sebastian was the only great violin maker of his generation.

¹⁴ A violin of this type, without a label, attributed to Johannes Jais from Bolzano, is pictured in Wolfgang Zunterer et al., *Alte Geigen und Bogen*, Cologne 1997, pp. 52–55.

¹⁵ This error came to light as the result of deep discussions in the 1990s between Benjamin Schröder (Frankfurt) and myself (Wolfgang Zunterer).

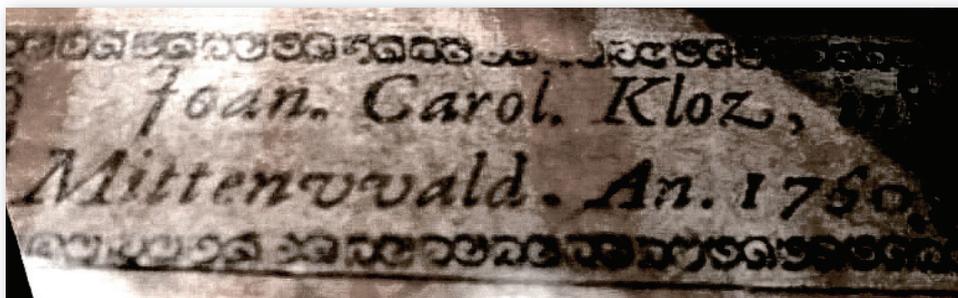
Johann Carol. Kloz (1709 – 1769), was the third violin-making son of Mathias Kloz and his second wife, Ursula (née Schlaucher, widowed Schandl). In 1735 he married Margaretha Knilling and, following her death in 1751, married Maria Sailer in 1753.

It is difficult to say where Johann Carol. Kloz trained. Born in 1709 he began an apprenticeship around 1723. At that time his father was already seventy years old. No records exist as to whether Johann Carol. completed his training with him or an older brother.

The earliest instrument known to have been made by Johann Carol. is a viola d'amore that has a hand-written label from 1735.



Like his brother Sebastian, he used printed labels from around 1750 onwards – unfortunately, on most of these, the date is difficult to decipher.





Violin, 1759

The work around the edges with inlays is not executed with the same skilled precision as in that of his two brothers.



Viola, 1764

The light-brown varnish of his instruments reflects the Mittenwald style of the time.

Johann Carol. based his viola on his father's, increasing its length, however, to 42 cm.



In 1735 Johann Carol. Kloz bought a house (now Fritz Prölß Platz no. 16), that he transferred to his son, Michael, in 1774.

Dendrochronological tests on a number of early Mittenwald violins have revealed that the wood came from the Mittenwald area and that the trees had been felled at a similar altitude.¹⁶

It has been found that other instruments not actually from Mittenwald were also made of Mittenwald spruce. It would appear that the trade in wood for making instruments had become established by the mid 18th century.

Records show that eleven violin makers completed their apprenticeships under Mathias Kloz or his sons before 1750. In addition, dates in the biographies of fourteen other violin makers in Mittenwald indicate that they had completed their training by 1750 or that they were already working independently at this time.

From the 1760s onwards violins were in great demand and a striking number of young residents from Mittenwald trained to work in this field. Births registered in church records after around 1750 frequently give the fathers' profession as a violin maker.

It can be assumed that Sebastian Kloz trained a large percentage of this generation of Mittenwald violin makers and it is, therefore, not surprising that many violins made at this time are based on the Sebastian Kloz model.

Mittenwald violins were probably jointly marketed at this time too. Simultaneously, the sale of Mittenwald instruments and prepared wood also became established on a large scale through merchants.

¹⁶ All dendrochronological tests were carried out by Wolfgang Hamberger of Munich so that a comparison is possible. In the case of a number of instruments by early members of the Kloz family, i.e. Mathias, Georg and Sebastian, dendrochronological tests of the wood used have shown that a high percentage match. According to our own research and contrary to current scholarly opinion, this does not necessarily mean that the wood is from the same tree. The only decisive fact that dendrochronological tests provide is that a violin cannot have been made before the date of the last tree ring.

Pupils of Mathias Kloz and his sons



Andreas Jais (1685 - 1753), the son of Georg Sagmüller and Katharina Jais, was Mathias Kloz's first pupil. It would appear that the Kloz and Jais families were friends as both couples were the godparents of each others' children.

Andreas Jais' lion's head

Andreas Jais' apprenticeship must have been from 1699 until 1704. He later became the godfather of Mathias Kloz's youngest son, Johann Carol, born on 29 January 1709, and was entered in the baptismal register as an unmarried lute maker. A cello made by him dated 1707 seems to have been in the possession of the merchant Johann Baader for a very long time.¹⁷

For a brief period in 1707 Jais helped Georg Seelos in Innsbruck who had become ill, repairing instruments played there at court. In 1712 Andreas Jais, who by this time was living in Tölz, applied for a permit to settle in Freising where he wanted to set up business. His application was turned down and, as a result, he remained in Tölz where he was a very prolific instrument maker, producing viols of all sizes and double basses, as well as violins, violas and cellos. A number of his viole d'amore are very similar in both their type and execution to several instruments which bear the label of a certain Paul Alletsee. Jais presumably supplied Alletsee, who was based near Munich, with viole d'amore

A good picture can be made of his œuvre in general as many of his instruments still exist. His violins, violas, cellos, viols and double basses have handwritten labels and feature a lion's head. Andreas Jais died in 1753 in Tölz.



Jais' label, 1725

¹⁷ Op. cit. Baader (see note 3 above), p. 206

Mathias Kloz's eldest son, **Georg**, did his training at the same time as Andreas Jais. One of his pupils was **Johannes Augustin Gäßler (1719 - 1767)**, son of the Bader family from Mittenwald. He started his apprenticeship around 1736. After the death of Georg Kloz in 1737, Johannes Augustin Gäßler continued his training under Sebastian Kloz. In the certificate issued on 13 March 1742 after completing his apprenticeship, mention is made of Mathias Kloz, by this time an old man, who acted as a witness. He is called the 'world-famous violin maker from here'.¹⁸

From correspondence records of the district court in Garmisch it is evident that also his brother **Anton Gäßler (1724 - 1762)**, and probably **Andreas Gäßler (1725 - 1753)** as well, completed a six-year apprenticeship under Sebastian Kloz.¹⁹

There is also documentary evidence of another pupil of Matthias Kloz's – **Michael Schandl (1698 - 1749)**. In 1705 Kloz married his second wife, Ursula Schandl who already had a son, Michael. According to the guardianship transcript, Mathias Kloz was to receive 28 guilders and 16 kreutzers for instructing Michael Schandl.²⁰ Schandl died in 1749. No instrument with a label of his is known today.

A letter of application dated 1712 to the Bishop of Freising reveals that **Johannes Dänzl (1692 - 1728)**, the son of the linen weaver Michael Dänzl and his wife Katharina from Mittenwald, was an apprentice at Mathias Kloz's for five years. Dänzl, however, was only granted a six-month residence permit for Freising.²¹ Later on, Mathias Kloz was a witness to the marriage contract made between Johannes Dänzl and his wife Maria Wackerl on 12 October 1715.²² A document of 1720 shows that Johannes Dänzl trained **Andreas Ostermünchner** of Mittenwald to be a violin maker.²³ Johannes Dänzl died at the age of only 36 in 1728. Only one instrument with his label dated 1714 is known.²⁴

¹⁸ BayHStA Briefprotokolle Gericht Garmisch 191

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Layer, Klotz p. 28

²¹ BayHStA HL 3 Fasz. 233 no. 1

²² Layer, Klotz p. 25

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Geigenbaumuseum Mittenwald.

One of Johann Carol Kloz's later pupils was **Philipp Sailer**, the son of Lorenz and Anna Sailer. In the presence of the old Mathias Kloz – as expressly mentioned – his apprenticeship certificate was issued on 28 January 1742 following a five-year apprenticeship.²⁵

After training for five years, apprentices were presented with a handwritten letter from their employer, confirming that they had learnt the trade of a violin maker in a certain workshop. Those who continued to work in Mittenwald did not actually require any documents. An apprenticeship certificate was needed, however, if they chose to leave the County of Werdenfels – which extended as far as Oberau, just to the north of Garmisch.

From the Benedictine abbey in Weihenstephan near Freising an inventory of instruments and their estimated value, drawn up in 1783, has survived.²⁶ Unfortunately the dates of the instruments are not listed. Express mention is also made of Kloz violins with Amati and Stainer labels. The name Kloz was therefore already so well known in the last thirty years of the 18th century that violins with Amati and Stainer labels could nevertheless be correctly attributed.

Mathias Kloz founded violin making in Mittenwald which became established through his sons and pupils who, in turn, trained apprentices of their own. Around 1750 there were already 21 violin makers whose instruments were sold throughout Europe. As Leopold Mozart, the father of Wolfgang Amadeus, wrote when in Paris on 27 November 1764 to a friend in Salzburg: “[...] Paris and London are full of Mittenwald violins [...].”²⁷ By 1800, the number of violin makers had already increased to ninety. Mittenwald had become one of the most important centres of violin making in Europe.²⁷

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Wolfgang Zunterer in collaboration with Constanze Werner, 2015

²⁵ Ibid. p. 28.

²⁶ Photocopy from the estate of Walter Senn in the Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum.

²⁷ Internationale Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg (ed.), assembled and with a commentary by Wilhelm A. Bauer and Otto Erich Deutsch, *Briefe und Aufzeichnungen*, collected works, 7 vols., Kassel 1962 ff., vol. 1, p. 177.