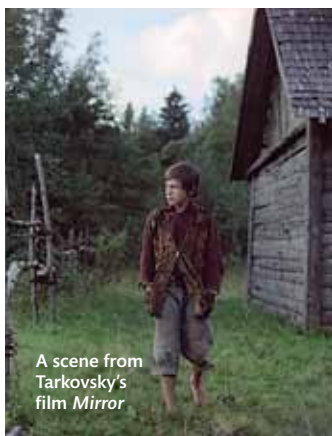


# my FAVOURITE THINGS



Stuttgart-based maker, restorer and dealer HIERONYMUS KÖSTLER reveals the things and people that mean the most to him



A scene from Tarkovsky's film *Mirror*

## TARKOVSKY'S MIRROR

I don't have a TV, so I don't see many films. But there is one film that impressed me a lot – *Mirror* by Andrei Tarkovsky. I first saw it in London in the early 1980s. It left a deep impression. I've seen it a couple of times now, and I think it's absolutely fantastic. It's about somebody reflecting on his life, and is very dark. Tarkovsky uses really subtle camera movements, and often long shots of nature, such as wind. I can't explain why I particularly like the film, but it touches me very strongly.

## 'MESSIAH' STRADIVARI

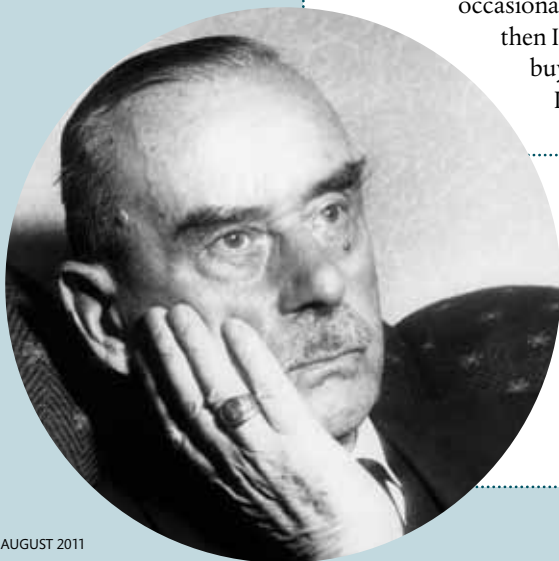
The most interesting instruments are those that are more or less untouched or only have a little damage. It's possible to see the maker's handwriting most clearly on them. For that reason, I'm very interested in the 'Messiah'. You can imagine what it looked like when it originally left the workshop. It's not that it looks new – it's more that it looks so pure. The instrument is unique, not only because of its condition but also because of its complete set-up. You really start to think deeply about it, and that's probably why there are so many differences of opinion about the 'Messiah'. Some people think it's not by Stradivari, but it's certainly a Stradivari. The soundholes are wonderful, and the whole instrument is very Stradivarian.



## WOOD

I love wood – it's a fantastic thing. But wood for making and the wood you simply keep are two different things. I have some beautiful wood that I would never dare to use because it's too nice. I'm not good enough to use it – I just enjoy owning it. I have a wonderful cello back that came from Andrew Hill when W.E. Hill & Sons closed in 1992. It's still just the rough wood, ready for making. It's probably about 200 years old. It's hidden in my workshop – occasionally I take it out and look at it, and enjoy it, then I put it back on the shelf. It's the kind of wood you can't buy any more – the grain and the flames are wonderful. It's fairly light and very strong.

† Thomas Mann



## THOMAS MANN

My favourite writer is Thomas Mann. I couldn't choose a particular book of his, though – I like everything I've read by him. I came to him fairly late, but I've read most of his books. I enjoy his language very much – he's absolutely fantastic at expressing things. His writing is very precise, very colourful.



An alpine  
vista in Austria

## NATURE

I grew up in nature – my family home was up in the mountains, near Salzburg – and I try to get out into the countryside with my wife and four children whenever I can. We spend the time thinking, enjoying the surroundings, taking mental pictures of all the beauty around us. It's very calming – the best kind of medicine. For one summer holiday,

we started to walk from the family home near Salzburg across the Alps and down to Graz – about 140km. Our 5-year-old had no problem with it, but our 14-year-old son said it was a stupid thing to do – although after a couple of days he was quite happy to do it. With six people, though, you have to organise things well – everything had to be planned down to the last detail.

## MY GARDEN

We have a nice garden, and I like to look after it. It's like my own little bit of nature. Gardening is a change from instrument making – it's rough work, and you have to dig and use your muscles more. But it takes your mind off any stress – one hour in the garden and everything is forgotten. We have a collection of Mediterranean plants and some lemon and orange trees. The garden is fairly big, about 2,000 square metres, so there's plenty to do, but I only work there when I want to – I'm not obsessed about it. Occasionally, I would be happy if the rest of the family helped, but that doesn't seem to happen often!



MIRROR PHOTO COURTESY ARTIFICIAL EYE, MESSIAH PHOTO ARCHIVE/LEARN, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, THOMAS WANN PHOTO, NIKENZO OBERRECHT, ALPS PHOTO, ALESSANDRO ISBERNIG, FOTOLIA