



LSF-UK Mission report No 21

The Philippines

February 14-28 2026

Volunteer luthiers: Ijmcke van der Werf and Robert Cain

The Project

The Jose Depiro Centre for the Arts is situated near the town of Dinalupihan, in Bataan province on the island of Luzon. The centre is run by Fr. Joseph Cremona on behalf of the Missionary Society of St Paul. Amongst its many community activities, the Centre provides music tuition for local children and young adults with the help of local teachers, visitors and on-line lessons from overseas musicians. The Centre's youth orchestra reaches an impressive standard and is in demand to perform locally and further afield.

<https://www.facebook.com/KabataanOrkestra/>

The Centre provides an important social and educational point of contact for young people in the area. Apart from the multiple benefits of learning music, the more dedicated students can work towards valuable university music scholarships and then go on to employment. This is all the more important in this economically challenged community. It's a familiar story in all the areas where LSF-UK has worked and is ample justification of our efforts.

The workshop is operated by Aaron Platin and Gigo Gustily. Since our previous visit in 2022, Aaron and Gigo have been maintaining the instruments of the Centre and have begun attracting work from musicians further afield. With this in mind we offered to give more in-depth training so that the workshop could cater for professional players.



We were very pleased to see newly-built professional work benches which had been made by visiting volunteers from Malta. As on any

LSF mission, we went with a plan to teach some specific things but also prepared for anything else that came up. We had been asked to provide some tuition in varnishing and retouching. This is a really important skill as its often the only part of a repair that is visible to the player. Ijmcke took the lead on this.

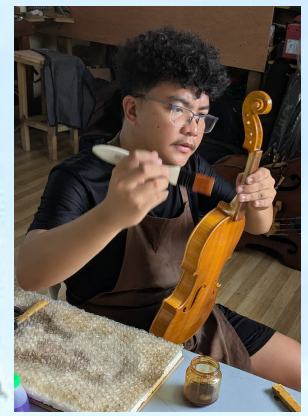


We spent a lot of time going over the basics, like bow re-hairing, and fitting bridges and soundposts. Innovation is the way for LSF, like using a phone to check the soundpost position.





As well as teaching, we always take extra projects along with us to keep us busy in the quieter 'down times'. We took a violin 'in the white' which was made for us by students of the Newark School of



Violinmaking. Rob demonstrated spirit varnishing and 'setting up' so that the violin was ready for use by the time we left. A high quality violin like this is a much-appreciated gift to the centre.



We had been told in advance that there was a violin which had been 'damaged by termites'. This proved to be a serious understatement but, in the true spirit of LSF and armed with a pre-routed back



donated by Andreas Pahler, we accepted the challenge. Working as a team, we managed to get the violin to the varnishing stage. A great learning exercise for the trainees and a fun project for us all.

Thanks to all our generous supporters who make this work possible especially

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We worked all day and most evenings for 13 days on the trot. As with every LSF mission, there is always so much more that we could have done but two weeks of intensive training is about as much as most luthiers and trainees can take - especially in high heat and humidity.

Thinking back to our first visit eight years ago it is very pleasing to see the workshop so well established.

In the end, LSF is more about people than instruments. It is such a pleasure and a privilege to be able to share knowledge and resources like this and to see the genuine impact on young people's lives. Long may it continue.

Aaron, IJmkje, Fr. Joe, Rob, Gigoj

Rob Cain and IJmkje van der Werf.