

sey; Cleopatra Valentien, from midtown; Kathleen Reilly, from Hell's Kitchen; and Lou Provenzano, from Queens. All the extras wore khakis. "We were told 'upscale casual,'" Pickett said. None of them had ever been to the neighborhood, but, Pickett said, "we've been talking about how nice it is."

Valentien said, "It's nice, but I'll take Manhattan."

The cameras started rolling. The extras walked back and forth. A few Brooklynites watched from the sidelines: two unemployed Australians, dressed in plaid; two plumbers, who applauded after a take ("Wonderful! Bravo!"); and a guy named Brian Rosenworcel, who was wearing gray Crocs and an inside-out T-shirt, and was holding a baby. He pointed to Galifianakis and said, "I recognize that guy Zach from the 'Tim and Eric' show." He pointed to Schwartzman: "I recognize Jason, because his band toured with my band." Rosenworcel is the drummer for Guster; Schwartzman opened for them a few years ago, when he played with the rock group Phantom Planet. Schwartzman wandered over, and they shook hands.

"Hey, man," Rosenworcel said.

"What are you doing here?" Schwartzman asked.

"This is my neighborhood."

The cameras started rolling again, and Rosenworcel said that he was heading home. "People are always filming here," he said. "They're always looking for a tree-lined street with brownstones on it. I guess everyone has Huxtable syndrome." He went on, "I'm actually not going to wait around to say bye to Jason. I've got a barbecue to go to."

—Lizzie Widdicombe

MAKE IT NEW! DEPT. CABBAGE



Mark O'Connor, the fiddle virtuoso and composer, moved from San Diego to New York four years ago, goaded, like many before him, by ambition, curiosity, and divorce. He now lives in a small apartment on West Fifty-seventh Street. To fit into it he had to sell

part of his collection of sixty vintage stringed instruments, leaving him with about fifteen, which he has hung on a living-room wall, over a shelf displaying some Grammys and fiddling trophies.

The arrangement, as he described it recently, is unchronologically biographical. Here is his first guitar, a cheap and much abused Hernandez classical, which he started playing when he was five, in Seattle. ("My mother was a ballroom dancer," he said. "She wanted me to be Segovia.") This Lucite box bound with bungee cords? When he was eight, he saw Doug Kershaw on "The Johnny Cash Show," and spent the next three years begging his mother for a violin. He made one out of cardboard, with guitar strings, but it collapsed, and he cried. The box contains the remnants. This white fiddle, signed by dozens of famous violinists, is the one on which he was taught by the Texas fiddler Benny Thomasson, in his early teens, and on which, as a teen prodigy, he won hundreds of string-festival contests. The next one is a 1946 Martin Herringbone guitar, which he played while touring, at the age of seventeen, with the jazz violinist Stéphane Grappelli. That's the Luke Thompson mandolin he won in the World Mandolin Championships, when he was nineteen. Another violin: you can hear that one on more than four hundred and fifty albums that he made as a session man in Nashville. The J. B. Vuillaume is what he's played since 1996; he went out on his own and began composing and performing modern classical music—string quartets, a symphony—inflected with traditional folk, jazz, and bluegrass. (He's forty-eight now.) This? This one he doesn't play. It's a nineteenth-century violin carved with the likeness of Pablo de Sarasate, a Spanish composer and violinist. "I'm trying to bring that tradition back," he said, citing a lineage of composer-violinists, from Paganini to Ole Bull.

The occasion for the apartment visit was his near-completion of a project that had been marinating in his mind for fifteen years: a new approach to teaching the violin. The O'Connor method aspires to be an alternative or a supplement to the Suzuki method, which was introduced here after the Second World War and has dominated strings education ever since. (That a rigid Japanese system of teaching largely German music took

hold even here, in those postwar years, is a testament to its efficacy.) "The method is a way to organize what I was able to do by happenstance," he said. The O'Connor method emphasizes North American music and techniques, instead of (or in addition to) the European music and the classical technique of Suzuki, and stresses rhythm development, ear training, and improvisation—less Bach, more Bill Monroe—in the hope that students can branch off, with competence, into whatever strain of music excites them. "Getting kids to fall in love with music is the great concern," he said. "And kids love fiddle tunes."

O'Connor intends to publish the method books this fall. A few weeks ago, he unveiled the first two books to about forty violin teachers, at his first-ever String Camp in New York, at the Society for Ethical Culture. The teachers gathered in a basement hall with their violins for a training session, while hundreds of students swarmed the classrooms upstairs. O'Connor, tall and meaty, dressed in khakis and loafers, stood in a corner, practicing quietly. Pam deWall, the instructor, called the group to order. DeWall had been teaching the Suzuki method for forty years, but always with fiddle songs on the side. O'Connor made a few remarks, using notes he'd scribbled on a FedEx pouch. He asked the teachers for their help in creating "the super musician of the future, the super string player, with a knowledge of all things." He also said, "If there wasn't such a thing as American music, I don't know if this country would even exist."

It was time for a run-through of Book 1. The teachers stood and commenced a rudimentary rendition of the old African-American hoedown tune "Boil 'Em Cabbage Down." DeWall gently asked, "If we can be a little beginnerly about this"—that is, lay off the vibrato. They did "Oh! Susanna," everyone, including O'Connor, playing the same plain line. DeWall said, "I still hear some vibrato back there." They ran through "Buffalo Gals," "Amazing Grace," "When the Saints Go Marching In," a very beginnerly "Boogie Woogie," and then—"More cabbage!"—a seventh variation on "Boil 'Em Cabbage Down." When they were done, O'Connor said, "That is the very first thing I ever learned on the violin."

—Nick Paumgarten