



First Bank of Greenwich Community Corner: Atelier is Still Making Music Better

BY RICHARD KAUFMAN

In a world full of corporations and big businesses, mom and pop shops that offer superior quality are few and far between. Fortunately for music lovers, nestled inside the small shopping center in Cos Cob at 403 East Putnam Ave., there is a true local gem.

Atelier Constantin Popescu, a stringed instrument shop owned by Constantin Popescu and his wife, Rodica Brune, has been in business in Greenwich for over 20 years, first in Riverside, and now in Cos Cob since 2008. The original location is in Westport, which opened in 1994.

Atelier sells newly made, or valuable antique stringed instruments such as violins, violas, cellos and basses. The oldest violins at the Cos Cob location were made in 1738 and 1796.

"They are a work of art," Brune said of the two violins. "These are really antiques."

Atelier, the only professional full-service store in Fairfield County that works exclusively with stringed instruments, offers repairs, restorations, rentals and appraisals, and buys instruments from those looking to part with them.

Popescu and Brune also opened up the Riverside School of Music next to the Cos Cob location, which provides private lessons for all stringed instruments and piano. The school offers referrals to other area string teachers as well.

Popescu, a professionally trained double bassist who graduated from the Bucharest Conservatory in Romania and The Juilliard School of Music in New York, has



Atelier co-owner Rodica Brune, First Bank of Greenwich President and CEO Frank Gaudio, co-owner Constantin Popescu, and First Bank of Greenwich VP and Retail Banking Manager, Emily Newcamp.

performed with the New York Philharmonic and many symphony orchestras in the tri-state area, along with solo performances in Europe and the United States.

Popescu came to America in 1989 with a background as a Luthier – someone who builds or repairs string instruments. Popescu perfected his craft in the U.S. and opened up his first shop in Westport. Brune left a career in the corporate world in 1997 to help her husband with his business, which also serves as a passion for the two.

"This isn't an industry that makes millions, but it's a nice industry. What can be more beautiful than music?" she said. "We love what we do, and we have some nice people working with us who love what they do, and we appreciate them."

Across the street from Atelier

THE FIRST BANK OF GREENWICHSM

is the First Bank of Greenwich (FBOG). A relationship between the two local businesses made perfect sense.

"We needed a local bank, and I just love them," said Brune, who noted that the bank helped out after her house underwent costly renovations in 2015. Brune is now on the bank's Advisory Board.

"They've been big supporters of the bank," said FBOG President and CEO, Frank Gaudio. "I can't tell you how great it is to have them in the neighborhood here. What they do with music and the kids [at the Riverside School of Music] is great. It's a wonderful atmosphere

here, and I love supporting art and music."

Rodica and Constantin have referred many musicians for various private events for Gaudio, so the two help each other grow and succeed.

"The work that they're doing in the community is wonderful," Gaudio added. "You don't see this kind of business any longer."

To learn more about Atelier Constantin Popescu, go to atelierconstantinpopescu.com. For more on the Riverside School of Music, visit riversideschoolofmusic.org