# SPECIAL FEATURE on EDWARD BISHA

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Full name: Edward Russell Bisha
Birth: 26th August, 1927 (Louisville)
Death: 4th May 1991 (Toronto)
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North American cellist Edward Bisha grew up in the U.S.A. but became a naturalized Canadian in 1973. He studied between 1947-49 at the Cincinnati Conservatory, and then 1950-54 at the Juilliard School with the great professors Felix Salmond and Bernard Greenhouse, and also privately with Janos Starker. He won the Piatigorsky Award in 1949. That same year (July) he featured as soloist in the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra season, playing the Boccherini-Grutzmacher Cello Concerto in Bb Major.
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He developed a flexible career. He was a member of the American Chamber Orchestra and of the Harp Trio (New York) and gave solo recitals and occasional solo appearances with orchestras. He moved to Canada, where he served ten years (1956-66) as principal cello of the Halifax Symphony Orchestra and simultaneously 1956-67 as a member of the Halifax Trio (later re-named the Brandon University Trio).
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He taught from 1966-68 at Brandon University. He then was professor at the University of Saskatchewan (Saskatoon campus) between 1968-75 where he also played (1969-71) in the Amati String Quartet, and then from 1971 to 1975 in the Canadian Arts Trio.
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He returned to orchestral life in 1975, where he was a member for one season of the National Arts Centre Orchestra. Between 1980 and 1985, Bisha worked in Halifax and Toronto; he played with the Canadian Opera Company and CJRT orchestras 1983-85. Edward Bisha again continued teaching - at the University of Saskatchewan 1985-91.
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One of his very best students was Ifan Williams, born on 10 July 1945 in Halifax NS, who is still active as a cellist and teacher. He gained great orchestral experience, playing amongst others for the National Youth Orchestra of Canada, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, New Philharmonia of London and the London Symphony Orchestra. Upon returning to Canada he continued the path of Bisha as an important university cello professor.

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Edward Bisha was married to the violist- violinist Norma Lee Bisha. They have three sons: Raymond, Bernard and Timothy.

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Photo: The University of Saskatchewan 'Amati' String Quartet in February 1969, with Bishe on cello and his wife on 2nd violin. Have a look in depth at the pic - these instruments - both violins, the viola and the cello - dated back as early as 1607 and were all built by the Amati family of Cremona, Italy!

*Violin 1637, Nicola Amati (Nicolo)*

*Violin 1627, Antonio & Girolamo Amati*

*Viola 1607, Antonio & Girolamo Amati*

*Cello 1690, Girolamo Amati II, aka Hieronymus II*

This first Canadian Amati quartet disbanded in 1971 but a new one of the very same name was born in 2003, playing together until 2018. The instruments remain in the possession of the university. In case you are interested, here is more info on the cello!:

https://tarisio.com/cozio-archive/property/?ID=40071



From left: M. Adaskin, N. Bisha, R. Klose and E. Bishe.

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