

PHOENIX *Since 1975* ARIZONA

*Roberto-*  
*Venn* 

**SCHOOL OF LUTHIERY**

SCHOOL CATALOG  
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2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR

**Welcome to the Roberto-Venn School of Luthiery.** Located in Phoenix, Arizona, the Roberto-Venn School is one of the few craftsmanship training centers of its kind in the world. Our school is designed to give the student a basic knowledge of the construction and repair of acoustic and electric guitars. We share with you a common interest - music and making musical instruments. The craft of lutherie is an art which combines both of these elements. With instrument building there is a tremendous satisfaction in working with your hands. The completion of your work results in not only an aesthetically pleasing woodworking art piece, but also an instrument whose music can be enjoyed indefinitely. We at the Roberto-Venn School of Luthiery have enjoyed practicing this art and feel fortunate to have the opportunity to pass on the knowledge and techniques we have learned to our students.

## **SCHOOL HISTORY**

The idea for a guitar building school grew out of an apprenticeship program started by John Roberts in 1969, which he called Juan Roberto-Guitar Works. Before this, John lived in the jungles of Nicaragua, flying airplanes for a wood import company. During a seven year period John began collecting native hardwoods with the aid of the native people of the region the Miskitos. His original intention was to build a yacht. This dream faded when his wife Dorothy developed a sight problem which needed attention in the states. The Roberts moved to Phoenix in 1968 and shipped three box car loads of rosewood and mahogany with them. During an initial business effort to sell wood to furniture makers and wood artisans John became acquainted with a guitar maker, Ron Carriveau, who helped teach him the art of guitar making. After several years of building many instruments John opened his door to others who wanted to learn the craft.

In 1971 William Eaton apprenticed with John and the two conversed often about the possibilities of expanding the apprentice operation. William subsequently moved to Palo Alto, California to begin an MBA program at the Stanford Graduate School of Business. Later he would return to help begin the formal school operation.

Bob Venn joined in partnership with John in 1973, bringing an expertise in electric guitar making, custom pickup winding, and sunburst finishing. Both men continued building guitars and taking on apprentices to the Juan Roberto Guitar Works and Venn Custom Guitar Shop. Bob had gained an excellent reputation for building custom instruments for many leading country guitarists. His experience would help forge the link between the guitar making art and the practicalities of completing work for professional and amateur players, in order to sustain an occupation.

In 1974 William returned to the workshop to build another instrument and to gather information he would need to complete a term paper assigned in a new enterprise management class at Stanford. The assignment grew into a detailed business plan for a guitar making school and copies were sent to John and Bob for their review.

John, Bob, William, and Bruce Scotten, an assistant who was helping to teach the apprentices at the Guitar Works, incorporated the Roberto-Venn School of Luthiery in 1975 and began the first lutherie course in the Fall of 1975. Much ground work was also accomplished by Dr. Tom Thomas who had been helping John begin the state licensing process with the Arizona State School Board.

The Roberto-Venn School of Luthiery was licensed in 1975 and approved for Veterans Training the following year. Work towards accreditation status began in 1977, and the school became an accredited member of NATTS (National Association of Trade and Technical Schools) in 1979.

The School's curriculum has evolved during the past forty years, but the core of the original teaching concept has endured. The process of building an acoustic and an electric guitar has been the basis for both theoretical and practical training. The Fall of 1995 marked the beginning of a five month course which expanded the four month (720 hour) curriculum to include specialty training in repair techniques and added extra hours (880 total clock hours). Roberto-Venn recently completed its sixth accreditation renewal with the ACCSC (Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges) and received its second consecutive ACCSC School of Distinction Award in 2009. Well over 1500 students have graduated since the first class of 1975.

The atmosphere at the Roberto-Venn School remains informal, yet organized. Individual effort is emphasized and essential for accomplishing the objectives of the guitar making and repair course. A cooperative learning environment is encouraged among students and instructors. This environment of shared knowledge is different from the traditional master-apprentice relationship where one teaches only one or two apprentices. In the school situation each student has the opportunity to absorb information and ideas from many instructors and students. The student also has the opportunity to see many instruments being constructed and repaired in addition to the student's own work. This method has worked well in providing a comprehensive framework by which to teach our course.

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

### **GUITAR MAKING AND REPAIR COURSE (880 hours - 5 months)\***

The Guitar Making and Repair Course offered by the school consists of practical and theoretical training in the construction and repair of fretted acoustic and electric instruments. Two courses are offered during the year with course starting dates beginning the first week of February and the last week of August.

The basis of the course centers on the construction of at least one acoustic and one electric guitar (or electric bass). In many cases students build more than two instruments, depending on each individual's work rate. In addition to construction, sessions are given in: tool use and maintenance, scale and template derivation and construction, finishing (including lacquer, oil, stain and sunburst painting), guitar electronics, pickup design - construction and installation, tremolo installation, the fundamental business aspects of establishing a lutherie shop, the care and preservation of stringed instruments, and other related subjects. Throughout the course time is devoted to specialized training in repair techniques and lutherie related business subjects to include lectures from industry professionals, graduates, and faculty. Students will have an opportunity to do extensive work on their own instruments as well as instruments provided by the school, for the purpose of refining repair techniques and skills.

The educational objective of the course is to teach each student the skills and knowledge necessary to pursue a career in lutherie. Manual and technical skills learned and accomplished are basic requirements for entry level positions with guitar manufacturers, retail music stores, repair technicians, individual luthiers, and other related guitar building and repair job opportunities. A secondary objective of the course is to offer professional luthier/repair persons the opportunity to learn our design and construction techniques.

Occupational objectives include: guitar manufacturer employee (custom construction, finishing, assembly, and repair/warranty work), music store repair technician, luthier's apprentice (employee), self-employed luthier, touring 'road technician,' and other stringed instrument or woodworking related work.

*\*(A clock hour is defined as 50 minutes of actual lecture/lab time)*

### **GUITAR MAKING AND REPAIR COURSE OUTLINE (Scope and Sequence)**

The twenty weeks of class are devoted to the construction of the student's acoustic and electric project instruments and repair training. Work on both acoustic and electric instruments begins during the first week of class. Stringed instrument repair techniques are taught throughout the duration of the class. A general outline of the subjects covered is given below but is subject to change depending on the pace of the class. (next 5 pages).

# Acoustic Guitar Construction Outline

## I

- A. Body Shapes
- B. Wood Selection
- C. Fretboard
- D. End blocks
- E. Molds
- F. Glue Top & Back Plates
- G. Thickness Sides

## II

- A. Soundboard
- B. Back plate & back strip
- C. Seam strips
- D. Headstock Designing
- E. Neck Blank Assembly
- F. Fretboard registration
- G. Headcap
- H. Truss Rod Slot

## III

- A. Back Braces
- B. Back Assembly
- C. Rosette
- D. Shape Sides
- E. Side bending
- F. Chisel Sharpening

## IV

- A. Fit & glue end blocks
- B. Kerfing**
- C. Vertical strips

## V

- A. Top Bracing
- B. Brace carving & voicing

## VI

- A. Glue Top & Back
- B. Trim Plates & sand sides
- A. Wedge & binding routs
- B. Binding Bending

## VII

- C. Binding
- D. Sand out body

## VIII

- A. Rough neck fitting
- B. Neck inserts
- C. Heel carving
- D. Fretboard binding
- E. Side dots
- F. Neck fitting
- G. Fretboard arching
- H. Glue on fretboard
- I. Headstock shaping
- J. Tuning machine holes

## IX

- A. Inlay headstock & fretboard**
- B. Neck carving & sanding**
- C. Pore filling

## X

- A. Lacquer finishing

## XI

- A. Lacquer curing
- B. The bridge

## XII

- A. Lacquer curing

## XIII

- A. Acoustic pickups
- B. Finish sandout and buffing
- C. Body and neck assembly

## XIV

- A. Fretting
- B. Gluing bridge
- C. Pickguard
- D. Set up & Final adjustments
- E. Acoustic check out

REV. 8/25/2011

# Electric Guitar Construction Outline

## I

- A. Orientation
- B. Wood options
- C. Scales length & neck joints
- D. Electric guitar drawing
- E. Body template
- F. Fretboard
- G. Hardware selection

## II

- A. Body glue up
- B. Headstock Designing
- C. Arch fretboard
- D. Side Dots
- E. Top glue up
- F. Pickups & electronic options
- G. Body shaping & carving

## III

- A. Neck template
- B. Neck blank assembly
- C. Truss rod slot
- D. Headcap
- E. Inlay Design

## IV

- A. Inlay Fingerboard
- B. Neck pitch
- C. Glue on fretboard
- D. Neck pocket & neck block

## V

- A. Layout electronics
- B. Rout pickup & control cavities
- C. Scraper Sharpening

## VI

- A. Neck carving
- B. Headstock Shaping
- C. Drill Tuner Holes
- D. Inlay headstock
- E. Final neck fitting
- F. Final headstock throat shaping
- D. Body binding
- G. Drill jack & wire holes

## VII

- A. Body & neck assembly
- B. Tremolo & locking nut routing

## VIII

- A. Fret preparation
- B. Fret Installation
- C. Finishing options
- D. Finish sanding
- E. Pore filling
- F. Staining techniques
- G. Begin lacquer finishing
- H. Sunburst techniques

## IX

- A. Continue lacquer finishing
- B. Electronics harness
- C. Control covers

## X

- A. Lacquer curing

## XI

- A. Lacquer curing

## XII

- A. Finish Rub Out & Buffing
- B. Fret Dressing

## XIII

- A. Final Assembly
- B. Set up
- C. Final electric check out

## XIV

- A. Tremelo Set Up
- B. Electronics trouble shooting
- C. Set-up evaluations
- D. Final adjustments
- E. Final electric check out

## XV

**Finish acoustic guitar**

# **STRINGED INSTRUMENT REPAIR**

## **I. INSTRUMENT EVALUATION**

- A. Physics / theory behind Guitar Construction
- B. Various Manufacturers Styles of Construction
- C. Step by step method of evaluating instrument's condition
- D. Determining the needs of the customer
- E. Consolidating your final evaluation & communicating this to your customer

## **II. REPAIRING ACOUSTIC GUITARS**

- A. Set-up, Action, Playability, Intonation
  - 1. Neck relief
  - 2. Saddle height & crown
  - 3. Action at nut
  - 4. Fingerboard dressing & fret polish
- B. Intonation
  - 1. Compensation: saddles / nut
  - 2. Fret scales
- C. Fretwork
  - 1. Level, crown, dress, polish
  - 2. Fret replacement
  - 3. Fingerboard repair - chipping & wear
- D. Structural Repairs
  - 1. Interior body (braces, bridge plates, etc.)
  - 2. Exterior body (top, back, sides, binding, etc.)
- E. Bridge Work
  - 1. Saddle work, re-cutting saddle slots
  - 2. Alternative bridge solutions
- F. Pick Guards and Miscellaneous
- G. Sound Reinforcement for Acoustic Instruments
  - 1. Pickups: Electro-magnetic, Piezo, Other
  - 2. Alternatives: EMG, Baggs, Fishman, Sunrise, other
  - 3. Electric - Acoustic Hybrids
  - 4. Amplification / Sound Systems

## **III. REPAIRING & CUSTOMIZING ELECTRIC GUITARS**

- A. Set-up Action, Playability, Intonation
  - 1. Neck Relief
  - 2. Bridge Work
  - 3. Intonation, Action
- B. Fret Work
  - 1. Level, crown, dress, polish
  - 2. Fret replacement, fingerboard repair
- C. Guitar Electronics
  - 1. Soldering, specialty tools, components
  - 2. Pickups, replacements
  - 3. Harness wiring (passive / active)
  - 4. Shielding techniques, hollow body wiring
- D. Tremolo Installation - set- up, servicing

#### IV. GUITAR TECH / TOURING

- A. An overview
- B. Repair, Set-up, Problem Solving
- C. Gear, mobile repair station, 'road' environments
- D. Life on the road

#### V. FINISHING

- A. Preparation (Sanding, scraping, steel wool)
- B. Finish Materials & Application
  - 1. Lacquer, Poly urethane, Poly resins,
  - 2. French Polish / French Lac
- C. Custom Techniques (Sunburst, Dyes, Airbrush, Other)
- D. Final Finishing
- E. Finish Repairs (Cracks, chips, holes, refinishing, stripping)

#### VI. TOOLS, MATERIALS & SUPPLIES

- A. Hand Tools, Power Tools
- B. Finishing Supplies, Glues, Solvents
- C. Bone, Micarta, Other
- D. Bridge Pins, End pins, Strap buttons, Pick Guard Material
- E. Woods - Rosewood, Ebony, Mahogany, Spruce, Maple, other
- F. Graphite & Synthetic Materials
- G. Jigs, Fixtures, Custom Tools
- H. Resources, Suppliers

#### VII. The Business of Lutherie

- A. Finding the Market / Location
- B. Finding the right situation within that market
- C. Arrangements with Music Stores
- D. Financing Start-up Costs
- E. Marketing your services
- F. Competition
- G. Professionalism & Shop Appearance
- H. Pricing
- I. Record Keeping / Tax information
- J. Employee / Proprietorship / business formations
- K. Zoning, Insurance, other
- I. Consultation Sources

#### VIII. FINAL OVERVIEW

- A. R-V Networking
- B. Placement Opportunities
- C. Parts & Supplies - Sources
- D. Organizations
  - 1. A.S.I.A.
  - 2. Guild of American Luthiers
  - 3. NAMM



## **LUTHERIE INSTRUCTION**

Lutherie instruction is provided by John Reuter (Director of Training), Steven Davis Jim Prater and Mark Allred are available for assistance with student projects. Our Workshop Assistant Brady Shreeve will also be available for assistance. Additional lecture instruction is provided by William Eaton, and special guest lecturers. Lectures, demonstrations, and one-to-one instruction are used to teach each step of the building process. A detailed instructional outline is used throughout the course as a primary guideline and reference source. Students will be required to purchase the Roberto-Venn School Workbook which includes: illustrations, a step-by-step description of the building methods used at the school, measurement details, and theoretical information. This workbook will be an excellent for future building and repair work activities.

## **FACULTY AND STAFF**

**William Eaton, Director:** William apprenticed with John Roberts in 1971. While attending the Stanford Graduate School of Business he wrote a business plan for a guitar making school. Along with John Roberts and Robert Venn, William helped to found the Roberto-Venn School of Luthiery in 1975. William added new elements of string instrument design and innovations, creating multi-stringed one-of-a-kind instruments at the school since 1976. In addition to his duties as director, William lectures and builds at the school. William is a four time GRAMMY Nominee, records with Canyon Records and tours nationally with the William Eaton Ensemble and Native American flutist R. Carlos Nakai.

**John Reuter, Director of Training:** John was hired as an assistant instructor for the school in 1985, after graduating from R-V and participating in the graduate workshop program. He received a B.S. degree in Manufacturing Engineering Technology from Arizona State University in 1982 and worked as a machinist and programmer of CNC machines before enrolling at R-V. In the years that followed John honed his skills as a builder and instructor resulting in improved construction techniques, curriculum revisions and his promotion to Director of Training for the school. John's custom built "Reuter Guitars" have been featured on the covers of Frets and Guitar Maker magazines and have been commissioned by fine musicians like Jorma Kaukonen and Joe Meyers.

**Joe Vallee, Instructor:** Joe graduated from Roberto-Venn in 1981. For the next ten years he operated his own guitar repair and restoration business in the Phoenix and Tucson areas. When an instructor position at the school opened up, Joe seized the opportunity to share his repair expertise as well as pursue his desire to design and build electric bass guitars. As a guitar tech for the Doobie Brothers, Joe also offers expertise in the responsibilities and skills needed of the touring "road tech."

**Barton Applewhite, Assistant Director:** After graduating R-V in December '93 Bart went on to assist John Roberts with his exotic bird collection. He then dedicated his time to touring and recording with his successful band Kongo Shock. Bart then returned to the R-V team as the Financial Manager and isn't very fond of frets. Recently Bart has taken the title of Assistant Director.

**Steven Davis, Instructor:** Steven studied at Roberto-Venn in the Spring 2009 class. After completing three years in the workshop assistant instructor training program, Steve is a full time instructor and has been running his EIR Guitar company for the last three years building and repairing guitars for clients around the globe.

**Jim Prater, Instructor:** Jim graduated from Roberto-Venn in the Fall Class of 2009. Jim has been mentored by other instructors in all aspects of the curriculum, from one-on-one instruction to giving demos and a few lectures. Jim comes to R-V with significant managerial experience, from a former life, and handles parts ordering, inventory, and other management duties at R-V, in addition to his teaching efforts.

**Robert Mazzullo, Instructor:** Fourteen years of cabinet making experience combined with his career as a performing rock bassist brought Robert to the summer '95 class. Even before he graduated he was helping students. He has recently returned to R-V to teach the schools newly developed 10-week repair class. Robert designs and build guitars, basses, and cellos under his "Mudd" Guitars proprietorship, and helps to oversee the school's facilities improvements.

**Mark Allred, Assistant Instructor:** Mark graduated from the Spring 2014 class and promptly opened his own repair shop under the name Allred Guitars. Mark was asked to join the team during the Spring 2019 class when a spot opened and has proved to be a valuable asset to the team. Mark continues to build and repair guitars under his Allred Guitars.

**Brady Shreeve, Workshop Assistant:** Brady graduated from the Fall 2020 Guitar Making & Repair program and then stayed on to attend the Repair Course and studied advanced building techniques. Brady's pure joy for the craft and overwhelming enthusiasm seemed a great fit for Roberto-Venn and he was asked stay on as a workshop apprentice where he excelled. He is now in the Roberto-Venn Workshop Assistant Training Program, on his way to becoming an instructor.

## **SCHOOL FACILITIES**

Classes are conducted in a central workshop area (2880 sq. ft) and a lecture-demonstration classroom. Forty four individual work stations in these buildings allow each student their own work space. Class size has ranged between 25 and 40 students in our classroom/workshop for the past few years (the student to teacher ratio is less than 7 to 1). The maximum number of students in our typical classroom/workshop setting is 35. There are also covered work areas outside, used for rough sanding, routing and milling work. A library / resource room is also available to students during classroom hours. A group tool system is used for all specialty tools, templates, jigs, fixtures, bending machines, and molds. Power equipment is also provided, including: band saws, drill presses, thickness sanders, table saws, belt sanders, routers, and dremel inlay tools. Students will purchase designated hand tools and supply items to supplement the use of school equipment and tools (see Course Costs for further details).

## **INSTRUMENT CONSTRUCTION**

Students will complete at least one acoustic and one electric "project" instrument as part of their graduation requirement for the five month program. After shop orientation; instruction in tool and equipment used (including safety and maintenance), students begins immediate work on instrument design, planning and construction. The instrument choices are listed below.

### **PROJECT INSTRUMENTS**

**ACOUSTIC GUITARS:** 6 String Steel string.

- Body styles: Dreadnought or OM.
- Back & Sides: Mahogany, Indian Rosewood, Claro Walnut, Bubinga,
- Myrtle, Koa and others.
- Neck: Honduras Mahogany.
- Top: Sitka Spruce or Western Red Cedar,
- Fretboard & Bridge: Ebony or Indian Rosewood
- Custom designed 2 or 3 ring Rosette, Headstock, Bridge, and Pickguard \*

ELECTRIC INSTRUMENTS: Solid body flat top Guitar (6 or 7 string) or Bass (4 or 5 string)

- Neck Joint: bolt on (flat Fender style or scarf joint)
- Body Shape: Approved traditional shapes or custom design\* within size limitations
- Size not to exceed: Guitar – 18 ¾ x 13 Overall length under 39”  
-Bass – 22 x 13 ¾ Overall length 46”
- Headstock: Approved traditional shapes or custom design\* within size limitations
- Body wood: Alder or Mahogany
- Neck Wood: Mahogany or Maple
- Top Wood: Figured walnut, Figured maples, Burlled redwood, Bubinga, Indian Rosewood, Padauk, Wenge, Koa, and many others.
- Fretboard: Ebony, Rosewood, Cocobolo, Bocote and others if available.

\* **Pending Instructor Approval**

**THIRD INSTRUMENTS:** A third instrument may be built (either acoustic or electric) depending on a student's individual work rate and ability. Instructors will designate which students may take on third instrument projects. Choices include: cutaway style acoustic, Chambered body guitar, mandolin, carved top electric, and all instruments listed above. Any other instrument styles and/or options selected must meet instructor approval.

**WOOD SELECTION:** Wood used depends on availability; and the choices the student has will be designated at the beginning of each class. Woods used at the school are considered to be among the finest obtainable.

**INSTRUMENT ACCESSORIES:** A fine selection of machine heads, bridges, fret wire, bridge pins, electronic components, inlay material and other accessories are used to complement the individual style of each instrument. **Students will use only instrument woods and hardware provided by the school in an effort to control quality and condition!**

*Prospective students may inquire further for more specific details on instrument, wood and accessories used at the school. Any changes on wood and accessory options will be discussed during the class.*

**STUDENT PROGRESS**

Student's growth in knowledge and skills is assessed by evaluating work on student project instruments, repair, and academic achievement (tests, quizzes, and homework assignments).

In assessing student progress the school will measure instrument building, tests, and academic requirements against entry-level skills and knowledge required in the workplace.

Grades will be comprised of an average of four categories: Acoustic Project Instrument, Electric Project Instrument, repair assignments, and Academic Achievement. Student progress on instrument work for the first three grading periods as well as the repair assignments will be based

on two categories: Competence and Work Ethic. Competence will count for 50% of each instrument grade and work ethic 50%. Upon completion of the project instruments, students receive a final instrument evaluation grade for the last grading period.

Grades are based on an A – F (100% - 60%) grade point system.

Student project instrument and repair grades and a composite score of the academic requirements are given at the end of the fifth week, tenth week, fifteenth week and at course end (20<sup>th</sup> week), and are also based on an A-F (100% - 60%)\* grade point system.

A brief description of each grade category is given below:

**Competence:** Student's overall hand and machine skills and quality of work in the completion of required tasks.

**Work Ethic:** Student's effort, motivation and dedication in their day-to-day classroom and workshop activities (including shop and tool maintenance) and ability to perform required tasks and assignments within a standard, proficient time frame.

**Academic Achievement:** Composite grade calculated from weekly quizzes, quarterly tests, and homework assignments.

\*Letter to percentage conversion: A+ (96.67-100%), A (93.33-96.66%), A- (90-93.32%), B+ (86.67-89.99%), B (83.33-86.66%), B- (80-83.32%), C+ (76.67-79.99%), C (73.33-76.66%), C- (70-73.32%), D+ (66.67-69.99%), D (63.33-66.66%), D- (60-63.32%), F (59% or below).

**Satisfactory Progress:** To progress satisfactorily the student's overall cumulative grade point average for project instrument grades and academic scores, described above, must be maintained at a D- (60%) or above at the end of the first quarter, D+ (66.67%) or above at the half-way point, and C- (70%) or above at the third quarter, and end of the course.

In order to graduate, a student must complete training within the designated course length (Guitar Making and Repair Course: five months, 880 hours), complete both project instruments and attain the required GPA as described above.

A student who fails to meet the minimum grade requirements or falls behind on the project instrument checklist or repair requirements will be notified by a staff or faculty member and placed on probation.

**Incompletion:** Incompletion of any required check-out, grade, repair requirement, or project instrument reverts to a failure at the end of one week. A student, who has an incomplete grade during, or at the end of the course, may be placed on probation at the discretion of the Director and Faculty.

**Probation Policy:** Students are monitored and graded throughout the course, as set forth in the Student Progress section above. A student who fails to meet course requirements or fails to complete projects within the time designated will be notified by a staff or faculty member and placed on probation. The probation period will be one week, unless otherwise stipulated, and begins with an advisory session led by a designated faculty or staff member. During this advising session the instructor or staff person will go over the specific requirements that the student must fulfill, during school attendance hours, within the probationary time period. Requirements will include: repeating failed construction tasks, completing unfinished construction tasks, retaking

tests, repeating academic assignments, or showing acceptable improvements in overall grades. Terms of probation and time period allowed will be documented in writing and maintained in the student's file. Students placed on probation status will acknowledge terms and understanding of the probationary concerns by signing a 'Probation Agreement' during the initial advising session. A designated instructor will monitor student work, assess progress, provide teaching support, and conduct an exit advising session at the end of the probation period.

If the student fails to complete the requirements satisfactorily, within the time allowed, a meeting will be held by senior staff and faculty to determine whether the student will be dismissed or given a second week of probation. If the student fails to complete requirements at the end of the second week of probation they will be dismissed.

**Other Concerns:** Any demonstration of: a lack of hand eye coordination, learning disabilities, emotional or behavioral problems, dangerous tool use, drug or alcohol problems or anything an instructor witnesses as a cause for concern, that could prevent a student from benefiting from the training offered, will be considered grounds for placing a student on probation.

Fighting, inappropriate behavior, excessive anger or frustration, and drug or alcohol use during school hours are all grounds for immediate dismissal.

**Reinstatement:** A student who is dismissed from the school may request reinstatement by writing to the Director.

**Withdrawal:** A student who withdraws from the course prior to the completion of the program will not receive a final grade or graduation certificate. Transcripts will include any interim grades given prior to withdrawal (i.e. first quarter, half-way point, third quarter, fifteenth week). For refund information and refund calculation please see pages 15 and 16.

**Reenrollment:** Repetition of the course or any part of, will not affect a student's previous grades.

#### **Student Withdrawal & Leave of Absence Policies:**

WITHDRAWAL: A student who withdraws from the course prior to the completion of the program will not receive a final grade or graduation certificate. Transcripts will include any interim grades given prior to withdrawal (i.e. first quarter, half-way point, third quarter, fifteenth week). For refund information and refund calculation please see pages 15 and 16.

1. The student's withdrawal date shall be the earlier of:
  - a) The date the student notifies the school of the student's withdrawal, or the date of withdrawal specified by the student (whichever is later) or
  - b) The date of withdrawal as determined by the school.
2. If the student does not return to the school at the expiration of a leave of absence the student's withdrawal date is the date of the first day of the leave of absence.

\*For the purpose of a school's reporting to a lender, a student's withdrawal date is the month and year of the withdrawal date determined.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE: The school does not grant leaves of absence.

A **Luthier Certificate** is awarded to each graduate of the school. Graduates may purchase woods and instrument materials and accessories available from the school, for future construction and repair activities. Transcripts are available to students upon request.

## **STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND CONDUCT**

Student attendance requirements are set at acceptable levels for the student to reasonably achieve the required knowledge, skills, and competencies of the school's curriculum and course objectives.

It is important that a minimum of class days are missed. Attendance records are maintained and all absences are recorded. Tardiness is recorded, and a student who is tardy four times will be charged with one full day of absence. All work missed because of an absence must be made up within two weeks. When absence and/or tardiness exceed 10% of cumulative school hours, the student will be notified with a warning, and advised by an instructor. Excessive absence is grounds for dismissal. A student who is absent more than 10% the total 880 hours (88 hrs. or approximately 10 days total) will be dismissed from the course.

A student, who violates safety regulations, disrupts other's work, or otherwise displays unsatisfactory conduct or progress will not be retained as a student. Failure to make payments when due is also grounds for dismissal.

The student must make a written request to be granted a leave of absence. Student withdrawal and Leave of Absence policies are published and are available from the school upon request.

## **ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

All U.S. students are required to have a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent. Foreign students must have a certificate of graduation from secondary education school or G.E.D. English language is required of foreign students. No previous instrument building or wood working experience is required. However, prospective students should be fully informed as to the demands and responsibilities of the course. Students who wish to enroll in the school should read the contents of this catalog, and consider how they might benefit from the training offered. Questions on the backside of the application form are used to help determine an applicants capability of completing the course successfully. If the applicant is in question about any handicaps, physical or otherwise, that could reasonably prevent use of the knowledge or skills gained from the training offered for successful on-the-job performance after completion of the course, this should be noted on the application. Prior to enrollment, applicants are required to read the School Catalog, Enrollment Agreement and "Understanding R-V Training and Course Content" (which must also be signed).

*FOREIGN STUDENTS:* English language is required for admission

## **ENROLLMENT - APPLICATION PROCEDURES**

1. Fill out an "Application for Instruction" form.
2. Make a copy of your high school diploma, high school transcripts, or G.E.D. (or recognized equivalent). Foreign students should send a copy of their secondary education school graduation certificate.
3. Send a check or money order for \$250.00\* along with your "Application for Instruction" and copy of diploma, transcripts, or G.E.D. to:  
Roberto-Venn School of Luthiery  
1012 NW Grand Ave  
Phoenix, Arizona 85007
4. Read and sign the "Understanding R-V Training and Course Content" form included with application.

*The \$250.00 amount represents a \$50.00 application fee and a \$200.00 tuition down payment.*

Please note that prospective students should read the Enrollment Agreement prior to returning the application and \$250.00. Students will be notified of their acceptance by mail. The Enrollment Agreement may be signed and sent after receiving a letter of acceptance or the student may wait to sign the agreement on the first class day. Official student enrollment will take place on the first day of class. Foreign students who are accepted will be mailed an I-20 form for immigration.

### **CREDIT**

Roberto-Venn does not grant credit from previous school attendance.

### **COURSE COSTS**

**Tuition & Application Fee:** The application fee for the Guitar Making & Repair Course is \$50. The total tuition fee for the Guitar Making and Repair Course is \$11,950. Tuition covers all instruction fees, shop & equipment use and School Workbook handouts.

**Instrument Materials:** The school will supply all materials used in the construction of instruments and the student will pay for these items in addition to tuition. Materials include: wood, hardware, accessories, inlay, finish materials, and any other materials used in the construction of the student's instruments. The average cost for the required acoustic and electric guitar ranges from \$1,800 - \$2,300. Instrument costs vary depending on wood and accessories selected.

**Hand Tools & Supplies:** Students are required to have specific hand tools and supplies to be used throughout the course. These tools and supplies are identified on the school's 'Student Tool List' with accompanying costs for each item. Students may purchase these items from the school or from other suppliers. Hand tools and supplies, purchased from the school cost around \$1500.

**Cases (optional):** Though it is not a requirement, we recommend that students make arrangements to provide hard shell cases for their finished instruments. Finished instruments have a value ranging from \$500 to \$2000 each, and should be cared for accordingly. Cases may be purchased through the school or from other sources. The average cost per case is \$80 - \$115.

Sales tax of 8.6% will be added to all material purchases, hand tools, supplies, or cases.

### **PAYMENT SCHEDULE:**

**Tuition & Application Fee:** Prospective students will send \$250.00 with their application materials (see Enrollment - Application Procedures above), which includes a \$200 tuition downpayment and a \$50 application fee. On or prior to the first day of instruction, the student will pay \$5,875 with a final installment of \$5,875 to be paid on or before the 40th day of instruction.

**Instrument Materials:** A deposit of \$1000 will be collected on the first of class and a second deposit of \$1000 will be collected at the midpoint of the course. Instrument material costs that exceed the deposited amounts will be due and paid the last month of the course. Students will receive a refund of any deposits made, less the cost of materials. A student who terminates training will be charged for all materials used or altered. Any unused materials may be returned to the school and the student will not be charged for these materials

**Hand Tools & Supplies:** Students are required to have specific hand tools and supplies to be used throughout the course. These tools and supplies are identified on the school's 'Student Tool List' with accompanying costs for each item. Students may purchase these items from the school or from other suppliers during the first two weeks of class. Hand tools and supplies, purchased from the school cost around \$1500.

**PAYMENT SUMMARY:**

On or before first day – 1<sup>st</sup> half tuition and instrument materials deposit **\$6,875.00**  
On or before tenth week - second half of tuition and remaining materials deposit. **\$6,875.00**

Hand tools & supplies payment due first two weeks of class

Cases (optional) payment due last month of course

Any remaining balances or refunds do will be collected or disbursed during last week of class.

*\*Payment amounts may vary for those receiving financial aid.*

**REFUND POLICY**

A) Rejection. If an applicant is rejected, the entire \$50 application fee and \$200 tuition down payment will be refunded.

B) Three-day Cancellation. Applicants who have not visited the school prior to enrollment may withdraw without penalty within three business days following either the regularly scheduled orientation sessions (first day of class) or following a tour of the school facilities and inspection of equipment where training services are provided. The applicant may cancel the Enrollment Agreement (contract) and receive a full refund of all moneys paid to date, if cancellation is made in writing to the director, and mailed or delivered to the institution at the address stated herein within three (3) business days after the date of signature.

C) Other Cancellation. An applicant requesting cancellation more than three days after signing an Enrollment Agreement and making an initial payment, but prior to entering the school, is entitled to a refund of all monies paid, less the application fee (\$50). Cancellation and refund request must be requested in writing.

D) Termination in First Week. If the student terminates during the first week of studies, following the three-day cancellation period, the refund will be made based on a straight hour attended pro-rata basis. The amount for the first week is not to exceed \$350.00.

E) Special Cases. In case of prolonged illness or accident, death in the family, or other circumstances that make it impractical to complete the program, the school shall make a settlement which is reasonable and fair to both parties.

F) Termination or Withdrawal Beyond First Week. If the student withdraws or is dismissed beyond the first week of studies the refund will be made on a pro-rata basis, according to course hours completed. This refund shall apply to 60% (528 hrs) of the program. The refund shall be paid to the student, less any unpaid charges owed by the student for the period of enrollment for which the student has been charged. A student who attends more than 60% of the course will not be eligible for a refund. Roberto-Venn’s refund policy is the same as the Federal Return of Title IV Funds policy.

**MATERIAL DEPOSITS**

A student who terminates training will be charged for all materials used or altered. Any unused materials may be returned to the school and the student will not be charged for these materials. Students will receive a refund of any deposits made, less the cost of materials as stated above. Materials include: wood, hardware, accessories, inlay, finish materials, and any other materials used in the construction of the student’s instruments.



### **CALCULATION OF A REFUND (FOR TUITION)**

The refund calculation applies to the first 60% (528 hrs) of the course. A student attending 529 hrs or more will not be eligible for a refund. Take the remaining number of hours to be completed (If 352 hrs or more, calculated from the last day of attendance) and divide this number by the total number of clock hours comprising the period of enrollment (Guitar Making and Repair Course - 880 hours). Multiply by the contract tuition amount (Guitar Making and Repair Course - \$10,450). This amount represents the refund amount, less any unpaid charges owed by the student for the period of enrollment.

### **RETURN OF TITLE IV FUNDS POLICY:**

The federal formula requires a return of any unearned Title IV aid if the student received federal financial assistance in the form of a Pell Grant, Federal Subsidized Stafford Loan, Federal Unsubsidized Stafford Loan, or Federal PLUS loan and withdrew on or before completing 60% (528 hrs) of the total clock hours. The percentage of Title IV aid to be returned is equal to the number of clock hours remaining in the course divided by the number of total clock hours in the course. Excused absences do not count as completed hours.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ALL FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID RECIPIENTS** Federal Financial Aid regulations have defined that a student who withdraws or stops attending prior to completing 60% (528 hrs) of the entire course (880 hrs) has not earned 100% of the federal financial aid that was received. That student may be required to return a portion of his or her federal aid.

### **APPLICATION OF REFUND POLICY**

Any refunds due to the applicant shall be made within thirty days from cancellation or failure to appear on or before the first day of class. Any refunds due to the student shall be made within thirty (30) days from the date the school determines the student's last date of attendance. If the student does not return following a Leave of Absence period (not to exceed 60 calendar days), refunds will be made within (30) thirty calendar days from the end of the Leave of Absence.

### **STUDENT SERVICES**

**ADVISING:** The student to instructor ratio is less than ten to one, and each student receives much one-to-one instruction. Instructors are available for help, and to answer questions about construction projects, assignments or any other school related activities. Students are monitored closely throughout the course and are assessed weekly during faculty meetings in regards to attendance and academics. Students who are not progressing satisfactorily or who are accruing excessive absences or tardiness are advised and offered additional assistance and support to get them back on track. These efforts are managed by all faculty and staff members.

Instructors Steven Davis and James Prater allow time for one-on-one sessions to communicate to students about their academic progress as well as relative coping skills and the occupational attributes that are defined in the school's grading system. Testing and tutoring services are also managed by our faculty and staff. These strategies aid in student retention and student outcomes by maintaining close one-on-one communication with the student.

For any advising that goes beyond the expertise of our staff, including psychological advising or medical care, students may inquire with Bart Applewhite to find out about alternative services, practices, and medical facilities, in the Phoenix metropolitan area.

## **HOUSING / TRANSPORTATION / CHILD CARE**

Housing, transportation and childcare assistance is managed by Bart Applewhite and Jim Prater. The school retains a database of housing options accumulated from previous classes to help incoming students locate housing. Arrangements for food and lodging are the responsibility of the student. Students should check with the school about one month prior to the start of a class for information about housing possibilities in the area. Past experience has shown that students have spent on the average \$250 - \$1,000 per month for room rent. Room and board costs will vary depending on personal lifestyle and whether or not the student chooses to room with other students. The school provides a list of students contact info of those who are willing to share accommodations.

## **FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID**

The Roberto-Venn School of Luthiery is Accredited by the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC). Qualifying students may participate in the following federal educational assistance programs: Federal Pell Grant and/or the Family Federal Educational Loan Program (FFELP). Students wishing to apply for financial aid (grant or loans) may contact the school for further information. (These financial aid programs are available only to U.S. citizens and certain eligible non-citizens.)

## **OTHER FINANCIAL AID**

Those students interested in applying for school benefits from: Veterans Administration (VA), Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Vocational Rehabilitation (various states), Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), Social Security; should contact your local agency or write to the school for further information.

## **STUDENT RECORDS**

Roberto-Venn School of Luthiery maintains permanent educational records that consists of all admissions, academic, and financial records and information upon which a student's enrollment is based for all students within the previous 5 years. The school maintains an official transcript for all formerly enrolled students. All student records current and historical are securely maintained and protected against damage or loss (student master records are maintained indefinitely). The school maintains student financial records related to financial aid, tuition and fee payments, and tuition refunds for a minimum of five years.

## **PLACEMENT**

Throughout the course emphasis is placed on relating the lutherie skills learned to applicable job situations. Students are given group and individual (if requested) placement assistance. Students will learn employment strategies and create resume and cover letters to aid in their job search activities. Students are encouraged to contact various guitar making companies, guitar repair businesses, music stores, or individual luthiers, from lists compiled by the school, to inquire about job possibilities. A referral letter or other student information is given to prospective employers, if requested by the graduate. The school does not guarantee job placement. The school maintains verifiable records of each graduate's initial employment for five years.

## **STUDENT COMPLAINT POLICIES**

The school has published procedures for handling student complaints. As an accredited school, the Roberto-Venn School of Luthiery is expected to meet or exceed the Standards of Accreditation set forth by the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges. If a student feels that the school has failed to meet an accrediting standard or any other criterion that the student feels is valid, they should express this concern in writing and submit this to: William Eaton, Director.

Upon receipt of the written complaint an advising session will be scheduled (within one week of receiving the written complaint) with the staff person, instructor, or Director who is most closely related to the possible resolution of such complaint.

If the complaint remains unresolved, the student may request another hearing with the Director. Such requests must be given in writing. A meeting will be scheduled within the week of receiving such request. Any actions/resolutions to be taken will be set forth during this meeting and documented in writing.

If the complaint is not resolved from the grievance procedures stated above, the student may file a complaint with the State Board for Private Postsecondary Education or with the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC). To submit a complaint to the State Board the student may contact:

***Arizona State Board for Private Postsecondary Education***  
***1740 W Adams***  
***Phoenix, AZ 85007***  
***602-542-5709***  
***<http://azppse.state.az.us>***

### ***INQUIRES TO THE ACCREDITING COMMISSION***

#### ***Student Complaint / Grievance Procedure***

*If a student does not feel that the school has adequately addressed a complaint or concern, the student may consider contacting the Accrediting Commission. All complaints considered by the Commission must be in written form, with permission from the complainant(s) for the Commission to forward a copy of the complaint to the school for a response. The complainant(s) will be kept informed as to the status of the complaint as well as the final resolution by the Commission. Please direct all inquiries to:*

***Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC)***  
***2101 Wilson Blvd., Suite 302***  
***Arlington, VA 22201***  
***703-247-4212***  
***[www.accsc.org](http://www.accsc.org)***

**A copy of the Commission's complaint form is available at the school and may be obtained by contacting:  
Bart Applewhite, 602-243-1179, [barton@roberto-venn.com](mailto:barton@roberto-venn.com)**

## SCHOOL CALENDAR / CLASS SCHEDULE

### GUITAR MAKING AND REPAIR (five months, 880 hours)

Fall 2023 August 3, 2023 – December 22, 2023

Spring 2024 January 15, 2024 – May 31, 2024

Hours: Monday through Thursday, 8:00 am - 12:30 pm \*lunch break\* 1:30 pm - 6:00 pm

Friday, 8:00 am - 12:30 pm \*lunch break\* 1:30 pm - 5:00 pm

The school is closed on Saturdays and Sundays. The school is also closed on the following holidays that occur during regular class session: Memorial Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving (Thursday & Saturday), Holiday Break which includes the week of Christmas and the week of New Years. (See Master Calendar)

*The Roberto-Venn School of Luthiery provides an education and an experience. Students have attended the school from every continent, except Antarctica, to learn and share in the art of instrument building.*

*The practice and learning of lutherie goes far beyond the education learned here and we are sincerely interested in the success of our graduates. We are proud of the instruments that are created here and it is rewarding to see that each graduate leaves here with not only an education but several fine instruments of value.*

# Roberto-Venn

## School of Luthiery

1012 NW Grand Ave, Phoenix, AZ 85007 (602) 243-1179

[WWW.ROBERTO-VENN.COM](http://WWW.ROBERTO-VENN.COM)

### **LUTHIERS:**

William Eaton  
John Reuter  
Joe Vallee  
Bart Applewhite  
Steven Davis  
Jim Prater  
Mark Allred  
Robert Mazzullo  
Brady Shreeve

Licensed by Arizona State Board for  
Private Postsecondary Education

Accredited by the Accrediting Commission of  
Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC)

Approved for Veterans Training

Luthiery Program Approved by:

Bureau of Indian Affairs

Comprehensive Employment and Training Act

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation for various states

Social Security

US Department of Homeland Security

Roberto-Venn School of Luthiery, Inc.

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August 3, 2023