

Pulling at Merriam's Heartstrings

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By JoCoLibrary

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K.C. Strings 5842 Merriam Dr, Merriam, KS 66203

In a cute, quaint part of downtown Merriam, Kansas, sits an equally cute and quaint shop called K.C. Strings Violin Shop. The shop itself is very much like a violin, adorned with warm varnished wood. K.C. Strings is a full service violin shop, which includes services for the entire violin family: viola, cello and bass. You can purchase or rent an instrument that has been constructed right there in the shop or you can have your instrument repaired or altered. While many Johnson Countians use their services, they also have clientele all over the world, from beginners to professional musicians.



Anton Krutz, owner of K.C. Strings

Anton Krutz and his father, Misha Krutz, opened K.C. Strings in 1992 in Merriam. They both hail from Leningrad, Russia, now Saint Petersburg. Misha played for the Kansas City Symphony for 30 years. Anton grew up in Johnson County, and after graduating from Shawnee Mission West, he went to trade school to learn the art of making violins and then went on to study restoration in New York.



You can hear the passion Anton has for these instruments when he says things like, “When you have a symphonic sound of strings there is an emotion produced within people that is unrivaled by any other instrument.” Krutz is also aware that it is often the artists and musicians who history remembers. “Small towns that have artistic endeavors within them leave a legacy ... the arts give meaning to humans.” This is what makes K.C. Strings a gem in Johnson County. If you are ever in downtown Merriam, you may hear the melodic sounds of someone testing out one of the instruments at K.C. Strings.

While K.C. Strings has plenty of history of its own, a fun fact we learned while talking to Anton is that the K.C. Strings building used to be a Johnson County Library. Pictures on JoCoHistory.org show the temporary headquarters of the Library, which is now the studio section of K.C. Strings. It just goes to show there’s always another story behind each new facade.



Then & Now: Once the temporary headquarters for Johnson County Library, now home to K.C. Strings

-Beth Edson, Johnson County Library

Photos: Helen Hokanson, Johnson County Library