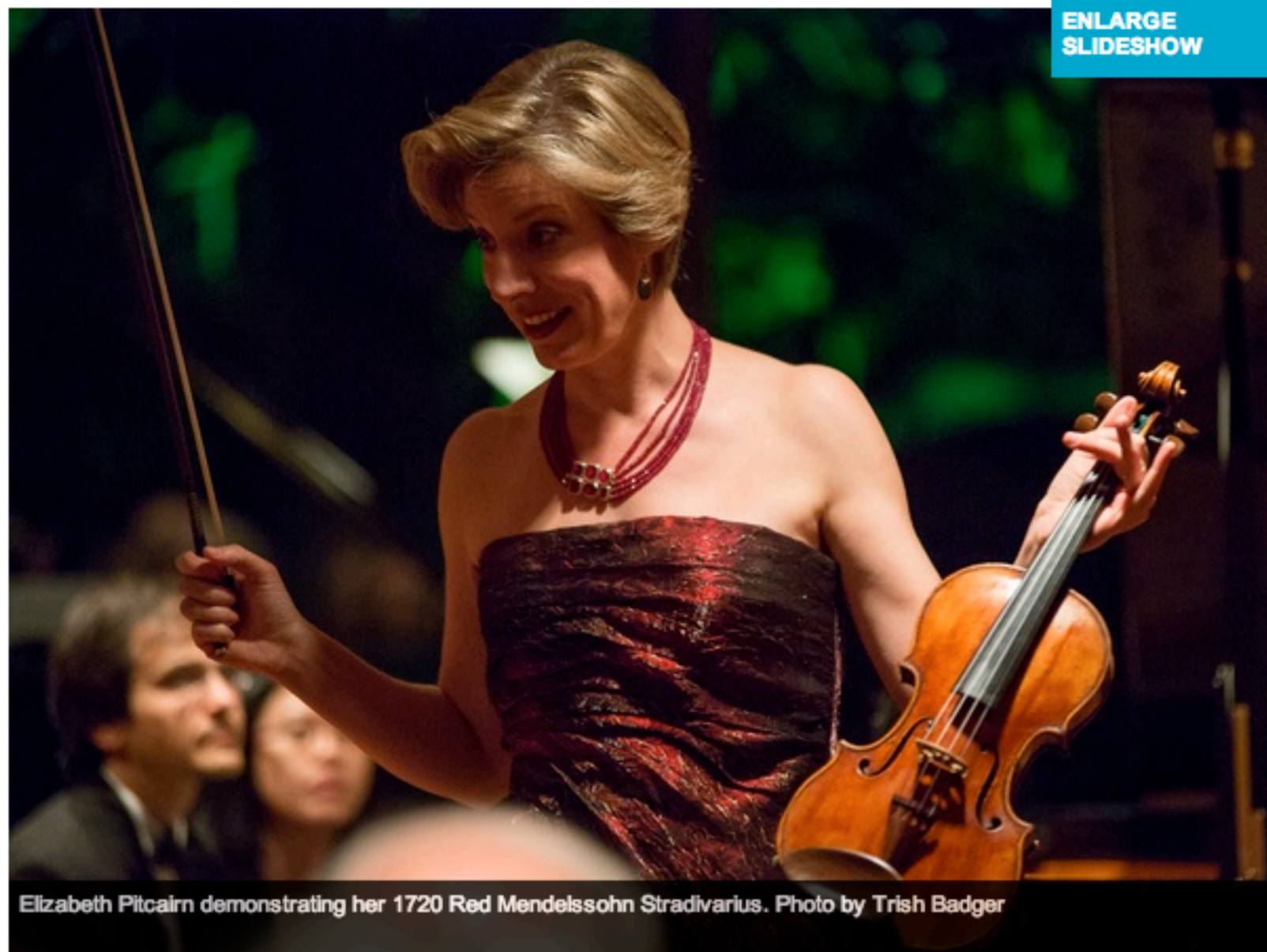


SHARE

 TWEET EMAIL

PIN

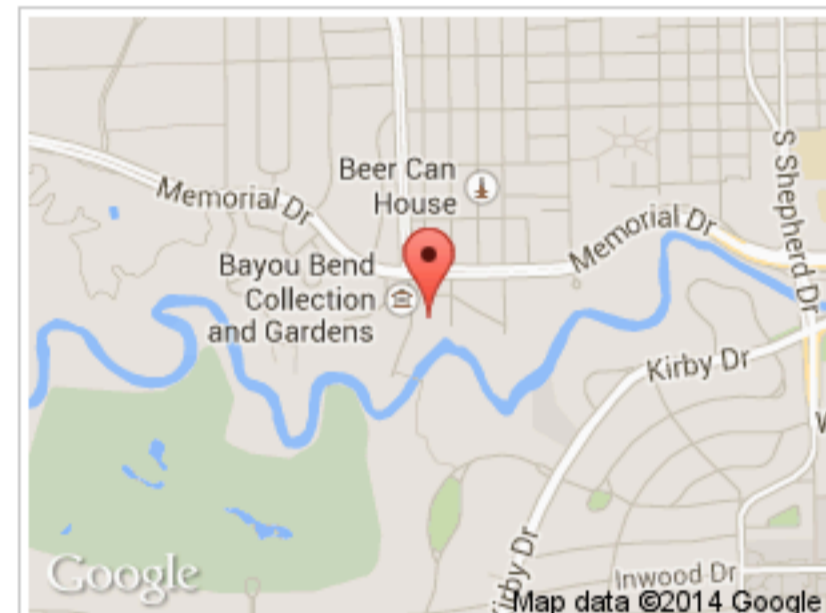
ENLARGE
SLIDESHOW

Elizabeth Pitcairn demonstrating her 1720 Red Mendelssohn Stradivarius. Photo by Trish Badger



The *Red Violin* — two thumbs up, agree? We are sure everyone is aware that the film wasn't 100 percent factual. It couldn't be. What happened between the storied disappearance of the real [1720 Red Mendelssohn Stradivarius](#) and its whereabouts for more than two centuries has roused the most fantastical of speculations.

Virtuoso fiddler **Elizabeth Pitcairn**, who acquired the instrument at a 1990 Christie's auction for \$1.7 million thanks to the generosity of her grandfather, calls her priceless possession Felix. It's definitely a man, but she's certain that the Strad is haunted by the spirit of Lilli Mendelssohn, an owner who, alongside her husband, died in a tragic car accident in 1928 while shopping for a new home.



Bayou Bend Towers

[Get Directions - 101 Westcott Houston](#)

And how does one care for such a melodious box? [Pitcairn](#) jokes that her violin repair expert has to perform woo woo sorcery to fine tune it for performance. We wouldn't want Lilli ticked off, now would we.

Crafted from maple wood sourced from a Bosnian forest, this jewel was the centerpiece of a [Chamber Music Houston](#) salon in a party room in the Bayou Bend Towers, where more than 125 music buffs were charmed by the instrument's exquisite resonance and Pitcairn's fearless flair. The Thursday musicale celebrated the art presenter's [recent rebrand](#) that saw its name change from Houston Friends of Chamber Music.

What seemed as if it were an off-the-cuff performance that included Kreisler's *Praeludium and Allegro*, Gershwin's *It Ain't Necessarily So*, Heifetz's arrangement of Grigoras Dinicu's [Hora Staccato](#) and the *Theme from Schindler's List* was received with ohs and ahs from the audience, transfixed by the fabled prestige of the guest of honor.

As a nod to the film, the refreshments were themed after the violin's presumed travels. A beer-caramelized onion tart for Vienna, apple blue cheese crostinis for Oxford, spring rolls for Shanghai and hill country fried chicken for its current home in the United States — darling idea indeed.

Enjoying the intimate fundraiser chaired by **Mary Ann Shetzer** with support from **Bobbie** and **Arthur Newman** and underwritten by **Larissa Poindexter** were **Polly Schott**, **Jennifer Macia**, **Elaine** and **Vytas Petrulis**, **Kelly Fischer**, **Daniel Musher**, **Lucile Agaisse**, **Allen Claman**, **Deirdre Spann**, **Alana** and **Jacob Bergfield** and Chamber Music Houston president **Curtis Robinson**.