



Emily Sun

May 7, 7:30 pm;
May 8, 3 pm

SASO Classical Concert

Bring together a phenomenal violinist, an extraordinary instrument, a gorgeous piece of music, and a skilled orchestra to back it all up, and you have everything you need for a not-to-be-missed concert.

The Southern Arizona Symphony Orchestra wraps the season with a pro-

gram that will include Berlioz's popular *Symphonie fantastique*, Brahms' *Academic Festival Overture*, and the crowd-pleasing *Violin Concerto* by Samuel Barber. Playing that piece will be Australian violinist Emily Sun, a gifted and enchanting performer who knows the concerto well. "I've performed it in England a couple of times and they love it, because it's sort of like Barber and Korngold are the two big American violin concertos," she says. "I played it last year in three concerts in Dallas, and I'm always happy to play an American piece in America. It's certainly fitting."

Barber is possibly best known to modern audiences for his haunting *Adagio for Strings*, but his *Violin Concerto* has come to be a beloved part of the repertoire, even though it had a difficult road to the concert hall. "Originally when Barber wrote the first two movements, the violinist [Iso Briselli] did say that it wasn't difficult enough. And maybe a little bit out of spite, he wrote a really difficult third movement. That third one is where violinists really struggle. For me it's like seven minutes of hell," she adds with a laugh. "You're just frantically try to get through it with the orchestra, but once it's put together, it's exciting to listen to as well as play. The first two movements are more laid back, and it's more about the beauty of Barber's writing. But the third movement definitely takes a lot of virtuosity from the soloist."

Sun is not one to shy away from a challenge. She has been dedicated to her craft from an early age. "My father was a prominent violinist, composer and conductor. He moved to Australia 30 years ago from China, and passed away when I was four. I grew up playing the violin; my mom wanted me to continue since I had started with my dad, and as I got older, it was just something that I loved doing. It got to the point when I was 18 that I thought, 'I just want to finish what my dad couldn't,' since he left so young."

Sun has already accomplished a lot, performing with major orchestras all over the world, winning numerous competitions, and being a featured performer in the 2011 award-winning documentary *Mrs. Carey's Concert*.

She truly knows how to make her instrument sing, and it's wonderfully appropriate that she has such a spectacular violin, made in her home country. "It was crafted in the 1940s by Arthur Smith. He's highly regarded in Australia, but he's not well known elsewhere," she explains. "Great violinists who have come to our country to perform fall in love with the sound and often leave with one of his instruments. Off the top of my head Isaac Stern and Ruggiero Ricci both had one. During my career I've been offered various old Italian violins, but they just don't compare."

Sun has never stuck to one style, genre

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or era when it comes to the pieces she performs, but there are certain things she looks for. "When I listen to something and it takes me to another place, I can imagine a picture and a story, so I'm very interested in playing it and putting my own interpretation on the music."

No surprise for someone who is so visually oriented, she says, "I'm quite into photography, so I do try to take some cool photos everywhere I go." As it happens, there is no shortage of destinations on her schedule. "I love traveling, and luckily my job does take me all over. When I go to a new place, yes I do my rehearsals, and yes I do practice, but I always have to find some time to see what that place is all about. I avoid all the tourist spots and look for where the locals are. That's how I think you get the true flavor." **May 7: SaddleBrooke DesertView Performing Arts Center; May 8: St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. 308-6226. <http://sasomusic.org>.**

UA School of Music. (May 1) Masterworks in Miniature, with the University Community Chorus. 3 pm. Crowder Hall. **May 1:** UA Steel Bands. 7:30 pm. Crowder Hall. **May 3:** An Evening of Opera Scenes. 7:30 pm. Crowder Hall. **May 4:** Arizona Symphony Orchestra, Arizona Choir, UA Symphonic Choir and UA Philharmonic. 7:30 pm. Crowder Hall. **May 7:** Outreach Honor Band. 1 pm. Crowder Hall. **May 7:** UA Wildcat High School Choir. 7:30 pm. Crowder Hall. 621-1162. <http://music.arizona.edu>.

PCC Music. (May 1) Chorale & College Singers Concert. 3 pm. PCC Center for the Arts. 206-6986. www.pima.edu/cfa.

PCC Dance. (May 6-7) Dance Fusion, under the direction of Nolan Kubota, melds together various styles, including ballet, jazz and modern. Fri: 7:30 pm; Sat: 2 pm and 7:30 pm. PCC Center for the Arts. 206-6986. www.pima.edu/cfa.

Tucson Arizona Boys Chorus. (May 7) Pops Concert, with the Cadet Choir, Touring Chorus, and more. Among the featured numbers will be Western songs, with signature rodeo roping. 3 pm and 7:30 pm. Catalina Foothills High School Auditorium. 296-6277. www.boyschorus.org. ▶

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