

SHARON ISBIN

Guitarist

www.sharonisbin.com

Acclaimed for her extraordinary lyricism, technique and versatility, multiple GRAMMY Award winner Sharon Isbin has been hailed as “the pre-eminent guitarist of our time”. She is also the winner of *Guitar Player* magazine’s “Best Classical Guitarist” award, and the Toronto and Madrid Queen Sofia competitions, and was the first guitarist ever to win the Munich Competition. She has appeared as soloist with over 170 orchestras and has given sold-out performances in the world’s finest halls, including New York’s Carnegie and Avery Fisher Halls, Boston’s Symphony Hall, Washington D.C.’s Kennedy Center, London’s Barbican and Wigmore Halls, Amsterdam’s Concertgebouw, Paris’ Châtelet, Vienna’s Musikverein, Munich’s Herkulesaal, Madrid’s Teatro Real, and many others. She has served as Artistic Director/Soloist of festivals she created for Carnegie Hall and the Ordway Music Theatre (St. Paul), her own series at New York’s 92nd Street Y, and the acclaimed national radio series *Guitarjam*. She is a frequent guest on national radio programs including *All Things Considered* and Garrison Keillor’s *A Prairie Home Companion*. She has been profiled on television throughout the world, including *CBS Sunday Morning* and A&E. She was a featured guest on Showtime Television’s hit series *The L Word*, and was the only classical artist to perform in the 2010 GRAMMY Awards. She performed as featured soloist on the soundtrack for Martin Scorsese’s Academy Award winning film, *The Departed*. Among her other career highlights, she performed at Ground Zero on September 11, 2002, for the internationally televised memorial, and in concert at the White House for President and Mrs. Obama in November 2009. She has been profiled in periodicals from *People* to *Elle*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and the *New York Times*, as well as on the cover of over 45 magazines. A one-hour documentary on her titled *Sharon Isbin: Troubadour*, produced by Susan Dangel, will be presented by American Public Television for broadcast on nearly 200 public television stations throughout the US this November-December 2014, and released on DVD/Blu-ray by Video Artists International.

Ms. Isbin’s catalogue of over 25 recordings—from Baroque, Spanish/Latin and 20th Century to crossover and jazz-fusion—reflects remarkable versatility. Her latest recording, *Sharon Isbin & Friends: Guitar Passions* (Sony) became a #1 bestseller on Amazon.com, and includes guest rock/jazz guitarists Steve Vai, Steve Morse, Nancy Wilson (Heart), Stanley Jordan and Romero Lubambo. Her 2010 GRAMMY Award winning CD *Journey to the New World* includes guests Joan Baez and Mark O’Connor. Ranked as a #1 bestselling classical CD on Amazon.com and iTunes, it spent 63 consecutive weeks on the top *Billboard* charts. Her *Dreams of a World* soared onto top classical *Billboard* charts, edging out *The 3 Tenors*, and earned her a 2001 GRAMMY for “Best Instrumental Soloist Performance”, making her the first classical guitarist to receive a GRAMMY in 28 years. Her world premiere recording of concerti written for her by Christopher Rouse and Tan Dun received a 2002 GRAMMY, as well as Germany’s prestigious Echo Klassik Award. She received a 2005 Latin GRAMMY nomination for “Best Classical Album” and a 2006 GLAAD Media Award nomination for “Outstanding Music Artist” (alongside Melissa Etheridge) for her *Billboard* Top 10 Classical disc with the New York Philharmonic of Joaquin Rodrigo’s *Concierto de Aranjuez*, and concerti by Ponce and Villa-Lobos. This marked the Philharmonic’s first-ever recording with guitar, and followed their Avery Fisher Hall performances with Ms. Isbin as their first guitar soloist in 26 years. *Baroque Favorites for Guitar* with the Zurich Chamber Orchestra remained on the *Billboard* Top 10 for 16 weeks, and her *Journey to the Amazon* with Brazilian percussionist Thiago de Mello and saxophonist Paul Winter, a bestseller in the U.S. and the U.K.,

received a 1999 GRAMMY nomination for “Best Classical Crossover Album”. She is also featured on Howard Shore’s 2008 GRAMMY nominated soundtrack CD for *The Departed*.

Her other CDs include *Artist Profile*, *Wayfaring Stranger* with mezzo-soprano Susanne Mentzer, *Greatest Hits* (EMI), and Aaron Jay Kernis’ *Double Concerto* with violinist Cho-Liang Lin and the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra (SPCO) which received a 2000 GRAMMY nomination. Her eight best-selling titles for EMI include *J.S. Bach Complete Lute Suites* and concerti by Joaquin Rodrigo which the composer praised as “magnificent”. She is also featured on the GRAMMY Foundation’s *Smart Symphonies*™ CD distributed to over five million families. Her recordings have received many other awards, including “Critic’s Choice Recording of the Year” in both *Gramophone* and *CD Review*, “Recording of the Month” in *Stereo Review*, and “Album of the Year” in *Guitar Player*.

Sharon Isbin has been acclaimed for expanding the guitar repertoire with some of the finest new works of the century. She has commissioned and premiered more concerti than any other guitarist, as well as numerous solo and chamber works. Her *American Landscapes* (EMI) is the first-ever recording of American guitar concerti and features works written for her by John Corigliano, Joseph Schwantner and Lukas Foss. (In November 1995, it was launched in the space shuttle Atlantis and presented to Russian cosmonauts during a rendezvous with Mir.) In January 2000, she premiered the ninth concerto written for her: *Concert de Gaudí* by Christopher Rouse with Christoph Eschenbach and the NDR Symphony, followed by the US premiere with the Dallas Symphony. Among the many other composers who have written for her are Joan Tower, David Diamond, Aaron Jay Kernis, Leo Brouwer, Howard Shore, Steve Vai, Ned Rorem and Ami Maayani. In 2003 she premiered John Duarte’s *Joan Baez Suite*, and in 2005 she premiered a duo by rock guitarist Steve Vai in their joint concert in Paris’ Théâtre du Châtelet. Upcoming premieres in 2015 include a work for guitar and orchestra by Chris Brubeck.

Ms. Isbin’s recent highlights include tours with the Zurich Chamber Orchestra, Tonkünstler Orchestra (throughout Austria including Vienna’s Musikverein) and Belgium’s Philharmonique de Liege, recitals and concerti in New York’s 92nd St Y and Carnegie Hall, Washington D.C.’s Kennedy Center, a week of performances at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris, Filarmonica Toscanini in Milan, MIDEM Classical Awards in Cannes, and an 18-city Guitar Passions tour with Stanley Jordan and Romero Lubambo in 2014.

Ms. Isbin has toured Europe annually since she was seventeen, and appears as soloist with orchestras throughout the world, including the New York Philharmonic, National Symphony, Baltimore, Detroit, Houston, Dallas, Pittsburgh, Minnesota, St. Louis, Nashville, New Jersey, Louisville, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, Phoenix, Buffalo and Utah Symphonies; Saint Paul, Los Angeles, Zurich, Scottish and Lausanne Chamber Orchestras; the London Symphony, Orchestre National de France; and BBC Scottish, Lisbon Gulbenkian, Prague, Milan Verdi, Mexico City, Jerusalem and Tokyo Symphonies. Her festival appearances include Mostly Mozart, Aspen, Ravinia, Grant Park, Interlochen, Santa Fe, Mexico City, Bermuda, Hong Kong, Montreux, Strasbourg, Paris, Athens, Istanbul, Ravenna, Prague and Budapest International Festivals.

As a chamber musician, Ms. Isbin has performed with the Emerson String Quartet; the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center; a “Guitar Summit” tour with jazz greats Herb Ellis, Stanley Jordan and Michael Hedges; trio recordings with Larry Coryell and Laurindo Almeida; and duo recordings

with Carlos Barbosa-Lima. She collaborated with Antonio Carlos Jobim, and has shared the stage with luminaries from Aretha Franklin to Muhammad Ali.

Born in Minneapolis, Sharon Isbin began her guitar studies at age nine in Italy, and later studied with Andr es Segovia and Oscar Ghiglia. A former student of Rosalyn Tureck, Ms. Isbin collaborated with the noted keyboardist in preparing landmark first performance editions of the Bach lute suites for guitar (published by G. Schirmer). She received a B.A. *cum laude* from Yale University and a Master of Music from the Yale School of Music. She is the author of the *Classical Guitar Answer Book*, and is Director of guitar departments at the Aspen Music Festival and The Juilliard School (which she created in 1989 becoming the first and only guitar instructor in the institution's 100-year history).

In her spare time, Ms. Isbin enjoys trekking in the jungles of Latin America, cross-country skiing, snorkeling and mountain hiking. Please visit <http://sharonisbin.com>