

Sharon Isbin

Guitarist

www.sharonisbin.com

Acclaimed for her extraordinary lyricism, technique and versatility, multiple GRAMMY Award winner Sharon Isbin was named the 2020 Musical America Worldwide Instrumentalist of the Year, the first guitarist ever to receive the coveted honor in its 59 year award history. Hailed as “the pre-eminent guitarist of our time,” she is the winner of *Guitar Player* magazine’s Best Classical Guitarist award, Germany’s Echo Klassik, Concert Artists Guild’s Virtuoso Award, and the Toronto and Madrid Queen Sofia competitions, and was the first guitarist ever to win the Munich ARD Competition. Isbin has appeared as soloist with over 200 orchestras and has given sold-out performances in many of the world’s finest halls, including New York’s Carnegie and Geffen Halls, Boston’s Symphony Hall, Washington D.C.’s Kennedy Center, Philadelphia’s Kimmel Center, London’s Barbican and Wigmore Halls, Amsterdam’s Concertgebouw, Paris’ Châtelet, Vienna’s Musikverein, Munich’s Herkulesaal, and Madrid’s Teatro Real. She has served as Artistic Director and soloist of festivals she created for Carnegie Hall and the Ordway Music Theatre (St. Paul), New York’s 92Y, and the national radio series *Guitarjam*.

American Public Television’s presentation of the acclaimed one-hour documentary *Sharon Isbin: Troubadour* has been seen by millions on over 200 PBS stations across the U.S., and abroad including Europe, Japan and Mexico. Winner of the ASCAP Television Broadcast Award, the film is available with bonus performances on DVD and Blu-ray. Watch the trailer at: www.sharonisbintroubadour.com Other recent national television performances on PBS include the *Billy Joel Gershwin Prize* with Josh Groban, and *Tavis Smiley*. A frequent guest on NPR’s *All Things Considered* and *A Prairie Home Companion*, Isbin has been featured on television throughout the world, including *CBS Sunday Morning*, Showtime’s *The L Word*, and as soloist on the GRAMMY nominated soundtrack of Scorsese’s Oscar-winning *The Departed*. She performed at Ground Zero for the first internationally televised 9/11 memorial, in concert at the White House by invitation of President Obama, and as the only classical artist to perform in the 2010 GRAMMY Awards. She has been profiled in periodicals from *People* to *Elle*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times*, as well as appearing on the covers of 50 magazines.

Isbin’s catalogue of over 30 albums from Baroque, Spanish/Latin and 20th Century to crossover and jazz-fusion, has sold nearly a million copies and reflects her remarkable versatility. Her two latest releases in May 2020 of world premiere recordings of music composed for her are *Affinity* featuring Chris Brubeck’s acclaimed concerto for guitar and orchestra, and *Strings for Peace*, with India’s legendary Amjad Ali Khan in a program of ragas for guitar, sarod and tabla. Her 2019 *Souvenirs of Spain & Italy* with the Pacifica Quartet showcases beautiful and rarely heard guitar quintets from the Baroque to mid-20th century, including works by Vivaldi, Boccherini and Castelnuovo-Tedesco, and debuted at #1 on Amazon and #2 on *Billboard*. Her *Alma Española* with Argentinian-American opera star Isabel Leonard has also been a #1 bestseller, and is the first Spanish art song album with guitar of its kind in 40 years. It includes twelve world premiere arrangements by Isbin, and was honored with a 2018 GRAMMY Award for Producer of the Year, Classical in recordings by David Frost. Other recent #1 bestselling titles include *Sharon Isbin: 5 Classic Albums* and *Sharon Isbin & Friends: Guitar*

Passions with rock and jazz guests Steve Vai, Steve Morse, Heart's Nancy Wilson, Stanley Jordan and Romero Lubambo. Her 2010 GRAMMY-winning *Journey to the New World* with guests Joan Baez and Mark O'Connor spent 63 consecutive weeks on top *Billboard* charts. Her *Dreams of a World* soared onto top classical *Billboard* charts, edging out *The Three Tenors*, and earned her a GRAMMY for Best Instrumental Soloist, 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 GRAMMY and Germany's prestigious Echo Klassik Award. She received a Latin GRAMMY nomination and GLAAD Media Award nomination for Outstanding Music Artist (alongside Melissa Etheridge) for her *Billboard* Top 10 Classical disc with the New York Philharmonic of Rodrigo *Concierto de Aranjuez*/Ponce/Villa-Lobos concertos, the Philharmonic's only recording with guitar, which followed their Lincoln Center performances with Ms. Isbin as their first guitar soloist in 26 years. Other bestselling titles include *Baroque Favorites for Guitar* with the Zurich Chamber Orchestra, and her GRAMMY nominated *Journey to the Amazon* with Brazilian percussionist Thiago de Mello and saxophonist Paul Winter. Her recordings have received many other honors, including Recording of the Year in *Gramophone* and *CD Review*, Recording of the Month in *Stereo Review*, and Album of the Year in *Guitar Player*.

Other CDs include J.S.Bach *Complete Lute Suites*, Aaron Jay Kernis' *Double Concerto* with violinist Cho-Liang Lin and the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, *Wayfaring Stranger* with mezzo-soprano Susanne Mentzer, 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.

Sharon Isbin has been acclaimed for expanding the guitar repertoire with some of the finest new works of our time and has commissioned and premiered over 80 works by world-renowned composers, including more concerti than any other guitarist, as well as numerous solo and chamber works. Works written for her by John Corigliano, Joseph Schwantner and Lukas Foss are featured on her *American Landscapes*, the first-ever recording of American guitar concerti. (In November 1995, it was launched in the space shuttle Atlantis and presented to Russian cosmonauts during a rendezvous with Mir.) She premiered *Concert de Gaudí* by Christopher Rouse with Christoph Eschenbach and the NDR Symphony, followed by the U.S. premiere with the Dallas Symphony. Among many other composers who have written for her are Joan Tower, David Diamond, Aaron Jay Kernis, Leo Brouwer, Howard Shore, Ned Rorem and Ami Maayani, with highlights including John Duarte's *Joan Baez Suite*, and a duo by rock guitarist Steve Vai which they performed in Paris' Théâtre du Châtelet. Recent premieres of compositions written for her include a work by Richard Danielpour co-commissioned by Carnegie Hall for its 125th anniversary and by Chicago's Harris Theater, and the dazzling *Affinity: Concerto for Guitar & Orchestra* by Chris Brubeck which honors his father Dave Brubeck in his 2020-21 centennial.

Highlights include tours with the Zurich Chamber Orchestra, Austria's Tonkünstler Orchestra and Belgium's Philharmonique de Liege, a week of performances at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris, Filarmonica Toscanini in Milan, MIDEM Classical Awards in Cannes, and most recently, a 21-city Guitar Passions tour with jazz greats Stanley Jordan and Romero Lubambo, as well as collaborations with Sting, tours with the Pacifica Quartet, performances with the Detroit, National and Montreal Symphonies, and sold-out recitals in Carnegie Hall, Philadelphia's Kimmel Center and the Kennedy Center. Her latest partnership, Strings for Peace, with sarod master Amjad Ali Khan in an extraordinary program of ragas for guitar and sarod, is an eloquent and impassioned call for harmony—in music, religion, and culture throughout the world. Strings for Peace debuted on a multi-city tour of India and will appear throughout North America in 2020 along with an album release.

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, Montreal, St. Louis, Nashville, New Jersey, Louisville, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, Phoenix, Buffalo and Utah Symphonies; the London Symphony, Orchestre National de France; and BBC Scottish, Lisbon Gulbenkian, Prague, Milan Verdi, Belgrade, Mexico City, Jerusalem and Tokyo Symphonies; and chamber orchestras including Saint Paul, Los Angeles, Zurich, Scottish and Lausanne. 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 also performed with the Emerson String Quartet and 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 Andrès Segovia, Oscar Ghiglia, and for ten years with noted Bach scholar and keyboardist Rosalyn Tureck with whom she collaborated on landmark editions/recordings of the Bach lute suites for guitar (Warner Classics/G. Schirmer). She received a B.A. *cum laude* from Yale University and a Master of Music from the Yale School of Music. She authored 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).

Sharon Isbin has been practicing Transcendental Meditation since age 17 and donates her time to perform benefits for the David Lynch Foundation, along with Katy Perry, Sting, Hugh Jackman, Jerry Seinfeld and Jay Leno, to bring TM to at-risk communities. In her spare time, she enjoys trekking in the jungles of Latin America, cross-country skiing, snorkeling and mountain hiking. Please visit her on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and www.sharonisbin.com

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