



UKARIA

MEDIA RELEASE

Emily Sun Named Next Custodian of 'The Adelaide' Guaragnini Violin

FRIDAY 8 DECEMBER 2023



Emily Sun with 'The Adelaide' Guaragnini violin. Photo: Nik Babic

Internationally acclaimed Australian violinist Emily Sun has been named the next custodian of 'The Adelaide' violin, crafted in Milan in 1753–57 by Giovanni Battista Guaragnini (1711–1786).

Currently held in trust by UKARIA, the instrument was purchased by the people of South Australia in 1955 and is today valued at over US\$1M. It has previously been played by an illustrious list of Australian violinists with a connection to South Australia, including Carmel Hakendorf, William Hennessy, Jane Peters, Sophie Rowell, Paul Wright and Natsuko Yoshimoto. UKARIA CEO Alison Beare formally handed over the instrument to Emily Sun on Saturday 18 November.

'This Guaragnini has a "golden" sound,' Sun said. 'I feel very privileged to play on this beautiful instrument, during this fleeting period of its already long life and history. The tone is very warm, dark and rich; very even and homogenous across the registers.'

'Possessed of a superb talent' (*The Australian*), with 'a searing and poetic tone' (*The Guardian*), Emily Sun's powerful sound and compelling, captivating interpretations have won her international renown. Emily originally shot to fame as a young soloist and media star in Australia, and internationally as a multi prize-winner. Now largely based in London and having performed with significant orchestras and in major concert halls around the globe, she is a fast-rising star. Emily's most recent orchestral performances have included Bruch with Mark Wigglesworth and Sydney Symphony, Beethoven with Asher Fisch and the West Australian Symphony and her recent world-premiere performance with Adelaide Symphony which received significant praise: 'The memorable premiere of a new musical landmark, Elena Kats-Chernin's violin concerto, featuring a wondrous performance by violinist Emily Sun' (*Limelight*).

Emily is currently Professor of Violin at the Royal College of Music in London and aside from her solo and chamber engagements is an ambassador for the college, recently speaking on modern pedagogy at the Global Music Education League Conference for Higher Education as well as coaching at the China Conservatory of Music. Emily's 2024 season sees her continue as Adelaide Symphony Orchestra Artist-in-Association, with two programs as soloist alongside conductors Andrew Litton and Shiyeon Sung, as well as debuts with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra (conducted by Johannes Fritzsich) and the Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra performing Barber. Record releases will include concerto performances with the London Mozart Players and with Adelaide Symphony Orchestra for ABC Classic.

‘It is my responsibility to understand “The Adelaide” and draw out its authentic sound, rather than impose on it my perception of what it should sound like – it takes time, patience and love to truly understand its depth and possibilities,’ Sun said.

South Australian audiences will have the opportunity to hear Emily perform on the Guadagnini violin with the ASO in Bruch’s Violin Concerto ([Friday 22–Saturday 23 March](#)), and in Barber’s Violin Concerto on [Saturday 29 June](#). Sun will also give an intimate solo recital at UKARIA with London-based Australian pianist Joseph Havlat on [Sunday 28 July](#).

UKARIA CEO Alison Beare said Italian luthier Giovanni Battista Guadagnini is regarded as one of the finest craftsmen of string instruments and ranks just behind Antonio Stradivari (1644–1737) and Giuseppe ‘del Gesù’ Guarneri (1698–1744).

‘We’re thrilled to have a mid-career artist of Emily’s calibre as the next recipient of “The Adelaide” Guadagnini violin,’ Beare said. ‘Emily has become an audience favourite in concert halls across Australia, and her ever-increasing array of international engagements are yet another testament to her universal appeal. Her close connection with local and national audiences will ensure the violin continues to be heard in Australia, whilst also playing a part in furthering her international career in London, as it once did for the inaugural custodian, Carmel Hakendorf, back in the 1950s.’

The previous recipient, Natsuko Yoshimoto (who joined the Queensland Symphony Orchestra as Concertmaster in 2021 after serving as Concertmaster of the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra), performed on ‘The Adelaide’ Guadagnini from October 2018–November 2023.

‘It was such an honour to have the opportunity to play this violin,’ Yoshimoto said. ‘As a violinist, your connection with sound is a unique one, because it’s such an intimate relationship, and you’re basically connecting with something that’s going to expose your innermost thoughts and feelings. In a way, it’s *more* than your voice, so that first, instant attraction to the sound is important because you have to see the potential for pushing and exploring the sound, and then you know you’re in for a long-term relationship.’

UKARIA Founder and Director Ulrike Klein AO is particularly excited about Emily Sun's appointment as the next custodian of the Guadagnini. 'It's been wonderful to see Emily's career go from strength to strength on the international stage, as she continues to build a reputation as one of the finest Australian violinists of her generation,' Klein said. 'Hearing her in recital at UKARIA over the years has been a great joy, and I know our connection will continue to deepen and evolve over the years to come. Emily's artistry is the perfect fit for such an exquisite instrument.'



UKARIA CEO Alison Beare handing over 'The Adelaide' Guadagnini violin to Emily Sun on Saturday 18 November 2023. Photo: Nik Babic

ABOUT THE INSTRUMENT

'The Adelaide'

Violin, Milan 1753–57

Carmel Hakendorf was a virtuoso violinist who, in the early 1950s, was invited by Sir John Barbirolli to give her debut in London. Unfortunately, the excitement of the invitation was overshadowed by the poor quality of her violin. Determined to ensure that this young artist had an instrument worthy of her considerable talent, the Music Committee of South Australia launched a public subscription that, with the help of several performances by Carmel, raised 1,750 pounds. With this considerable sum they purchased a magnificent violin crafted by Giovanni Battista Guadagnini in Milan in 1753–57.

In August 1955 the South Australian Guadagnini Violin Trust was established to preserve the violin for future generations. Miss Hakendorf held the violin for many years and was a member of the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra. Following her retirement, the violin was lent to several well-known violinists including William Hennessy, Jane Peters, Sophie Rowell and Paul Wright.

Now 60 years later, the violin is valued at US\$1M. No additional funds were raised to cover its ongoing maintenance and insurance and the instrument was at risk of falling into disrepair. UKARIA agreed to become custodians and the Supreme Court of South Australia appointed it trustee in 2013.

RESTORATION

In 2015 the violin returned to Cremona, Italy for restoration at the workshop of Eric Blot, an international expert in fine Italian instruments. Based in the city made famous by Stradivari, Eric and his team see many of the world's greatest instruments. After much discussion, restorer Barthélemy Garnier set to work and completely changed the set up (every item that is not original and needs to be replaced from time to time).

The results were astounding, and the violin has a much richer voice with more power, particularly in the middle and lower registers. It was also painstakingly cleaned so it now looks museum quality. The Board was so delighted with the transformation that it decided the violin needed a new name to reflect its true character and beauty. At the suggestion of Kerry Heysen-Hicks, who contributed to the public subscription when she was in grade two, the instrument was named 'The Adelaide'.

ABOUT THE LUTHIER

Giovanni Battista Guadagnini is often referred to as the last of the great master luthiers of the 'golden age' of string instruments, in company with Antonio Stradivari and Guarneri del Gesù. Over the course of his seventy-five-year life, Guadagnini made around 403 violins, twenty-one violas, thirty-nine cellos, and three double basses. His nomadic existence, moving as he did from town to town (Piacenza, Milan, Parma, and finally Turin) enabled Guadagnini to produce instruments that were inimitable expressions of the environment in which they were made. Today, Guadagnini's instruments are among the most coveted in the world, as much for their sound as the cultural potency they now possess.

Maker: Giovanni Battista Guadagnini (1711–1786)

Origin: Milan, Italy

Made: 1753–57

Current Player: Emily Sun (Artist in Association, Adelaide Symphony Orchestra)

Sound Notes: Rich and powerful in middle and lower registers

Owner: South Australian Guadagnini Violin Trust

Custodians: UKARIA

Date Acquired: 1955

Date Loaned to Emily Sun: Saturday 18 November 2023

ABOUT EMILY SUN

For full information and media clips of Emily Sun please visit her webpage:

www.emilysunviolin.com

Emily is represented worldwide by [Percius](#) and in Australia and New Zealand by [Cinque Artist Management](#). Emily's official biography for print can be downloaded from these website pages.

IMAGES

Images of Emily Sun with 'The Adelaide' can be found here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/gffxl83gnfacb3ao73opy/h?rlkey=gomvbk7hjsnznznc6tiy6oddv2&dl=0>

ABOUT UKARIA



UKARIA Cultural Centre. Photo: Christopher Morrison

The UKARIA Cultural Centre is perched on the hillside opposite the Mount Barker Summit in the picturesque Adelaide Hills. Since opening in August 2015, the magnificent 220-seat concert hall – purpose built for chamber music and designed by leading architect Anton Johnson – has become a destination for audiences and artists from across Australia and around the world. Recognised for its superb acoustics, diverse programming, and outstanding performances, it is also a place for artists to create and collaborate.

In 1985 Ulrike Klein AO co-founded Jurlique, the internationally acclaimed skin care label. The UKARIA Cultural Centre was funded by the Klein Family and built on what was once the Jurlique Farm, where many of the herbs, flowers and plants were grown for natural skin care products. Renowned for using the best in biodynamic and organic ingredients, these values have influenced the design and vision for UKARIA.

In 2010 UKARIA embarked on one of the most significant philanthropic projects in Australia's musical history – the acquisition of a unique quartet of rare stringed instruments (c. 1743–84) crafted by Giovanni Battista Guadagnini (1711–1786). This [matched set of instruments](#), held in trust by UKARIA and made available as a set in perpetuity to Australia's most outstanding string quartet, is unprecedented anywhere in the world. The current recipients are the Australian String Quartet.

UKARIA's vision is to enrich people's lives through culture. It aspires to become known as a place of inspiration, where artistry is nurtured and celebrated, and new work is born. By investing in Australia's living culture, UKARIA contributes to the global community.

www.ukaria.com

IMAGES

Images of UKARIA can be found here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/ml6dct3v4bz7yg0onl90f/h?rlkey=vwd5zukyo83765lrrf0c8pd24&dl=0>

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'The Adelaide' Guadagnini violin. Photo: Nik Babic



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