

Midori plays Schumann

by Amy Hegarty



the superstar violinist performs the great romantic composer's not-well-known but compelling violin concerto

ON FEBRUARY 28 AND MARCH 1, world-renowned violinist Midori takes to the stage at The Lensic to perform Robert Schumann's *Violin Concerto in D Minor* with the Santa Fe Pro Musica Orchestra, led by Music Director Thomas O'Connor.


While Schumann is one of the most famous romantic composers, his violin concerto has a complicated history, and the road to its publication and premiere was long and tortuous. Written for the celebrated Hungarian violinist Joseph Joachim in 1853—just a few months before Schumann attempted suicide and was committed to an asylum, where he died in 1856 at age 46—the work was rejected by its dedicatee and dismissed by two of Schumann's closest confidants: his wife, the pianist Clara Schumann, and his friend and protégé, the composer Johannes Brahms. "Joachim found the concerto to be unbecoming for

Schumann's reputation and [not on the same level as] his earlier works and refused to perform it," Midori says. "Clara Schumann and Brahms tended to agree [with that assessment]."

As a result of its unfavorable reception and Schumann's untimely death, the work remained virtually unknown for more than 80 years. Thanks in large part to the championing of the concerto by violinist Jelly d'Arányi (Joachim's grand-niece) and, separately, renowned American violinist Yehudi Menuhin (both of whom sought to give the work's world premiere), the piece was performed publicly for the first time on November 26, 1937—although, for political reasons, the honor fell to German violinist Georg Kulenkampff and the Berlin Philharmonic. Menuhin, who learned of the concerto earlier that year after its publisher asked him to assess it, performed a piano version of the work at New York City's Carnegie Hall on December 6 and the orchestral version with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra on December 23. Two months later, d'Arányi—who in 1933 said she was told about the piece and the location of its manuscript (in the Prussian State Library) by Robert Schumann himself during multiple séances—gave the work's London premiere with the BBC Symphony Orchestra.

Despite such attention in the early 20th century, the concerto has remained relatively underperformed, and Midori herself only recently turned to the work. "The Schumann Concerto is rather 'new' in my life," she says, "[but] it has been a greatly welcomed presence. I learned it a few years ago because one of my students wanted to play it. Since I had never played it before, I decided to learn it also. This is the first season I've been able to incorporate it into my [performance] repertoire."

Midori began cultivating that performance repertoire more than 30 years ago, when she made her debut at age 11, with Zubin Mehta and the New York Philharmonic. Over the years the former child prodigy, who moved to New York City from Japan in 1982 (the same year as her first Philharmonic appearance) to attend Juilliard's pre-college division, has branched out beyond performing and recording into teaching and community engagement. She is currently Distinguished Professor and Jascha Heifetz Chair in Violin at the University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music, and she oversees a number of organizations she founded, including the 23-year-old, New York City–based Midori & Friends, whose mission, according to its website, is to provide “high-quality music education programs to [New York City] students in grades pre-K through 12 who have little or no access to the arts.” Midori's achievements have been recognized with the Avery Fisher Prize, the Kennedy Center Gold Medal in the Arts, and the Crystal Award at the World Economic Forum, among many other honors. In 2007 she was named a United Nations Messenger of Peace, and in 2012 she was chosen to be a member of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences.

Having devoted a significant amount of time to performing the Schumann Violin Concerto this season, Midori says she plans to record the work this summer in Dresden. “While I believe that Schumann was deeply troubled toward the end of his life, I think this piece has many wonderful musical elements to recommend it,” she notes. “It has beautiful lyrical passages contrasted against virtuosic brilliance, and I believe that it very successfully captures the composer's individual musical voice. I enjoy performing this piece and hope to do my part to ensure it continues to enjoy a place in the repertoire.” 

Midori and the Santa Fe Pro Musica Orchestra, February 28, 4 PM, and March 1, 3 PM, \$20–\$65, The Lensic Performing Arts Center, 211 W San Francisco, ticketsantafe.org

DIY by Ashley M. Biggers Santa Fe

a monthlong celebration of the City Different's creative spirit

IN MARCH, SPRING THAW might make frozen rivers run again, but it's the city's collective creative juices that really start to flow. March 1 marks the beginning of Santa Fe Creative Tourism's DIY Santa Fe program, a 31-day celebration of art and creativity via a large and diverse set of hands-on workshops.

Part of the City of Santa Fe Arts Commission, Santa Fe Creative Tourism is an initiative designed to support artists, art-centered business, and their arts-education offerings. Its website hosts an online directory of artist-led classes in jewelry-making, journaling, and ceramics, among other pursuits, but in March artists lead significantly more workshops than usual. Brent Hanifl, a Santa Fe Creative Tourism consultant, estimates that workshop attendance increases by 400 percent during DIY Santa Fe.

Artist Sharon Candelario says she'll offer 10 tin-working sessions in March, compared to the five she hosts throughout the rest of the year. In her workshops, which are held at Medina's Chile Shop, Café, and Gallery in Chimayó, participants learn traditional tinsmithing techniques, and by the end of the class they'll have used their newly acquired skills to make an ornament.

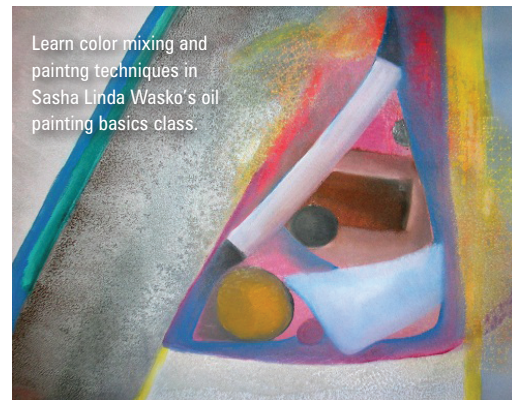
Sasha Linda Wasko, of Wasko Fine Art Studio and Gallery, regularly offers classes in monotype printmaking, digital filmmaking, photography book-making, and beginning oil painting. In March, she presents weekend intensives and sessions that stretch across three or four days, and she also offers custom-designed classes. To encourage more beginners to jump into the artistic pool, she offers a 10 percent discount throughout March.

Since part of Santa Fe Creative Tourism's mission is to encourage visitors to “experience Santa Fe's unique arts and culture,” during DIY Santa Fe, discounts will be available on rooms at Hotel St Francis, The Lodge at Santa Fe, the Inn on the Paseo, the Inn of the Governors, and the Inn and Spa at Loretto, among other spots. You can also enter to win \$500 toward class registration fees through March 31; visit santafecreativetourism.org for more information. 

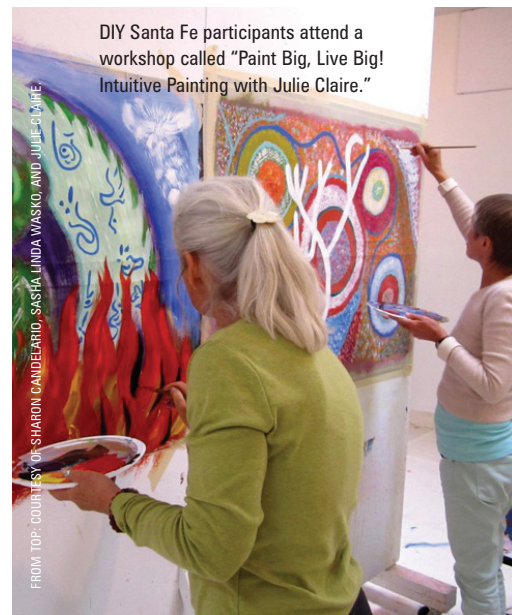
DIY Santa Fe, March 1–31, various times, prices, and locations, santafecreativetourism.org



Sharon Candelario hosts tinsmithing workshops in Chimayó.



Learn color mixing and painting techniques in Sasha Linda Wasko's oil painting basics class.



DIY Santa Fe participants attend a workshop called “Paint Big, Live Big! Intuitive Painting with Julie Claire.”

FROM TOP: COURTESY OF SHARON CANDELARIO, SASHA LINDA WASKO, AND JULIE CLAIRE