

## Artist Spotlight: Sarah Crocker

### UA's sole harpist finds joy in performing

By Katie Snowden

While other 6-year-olds were busy watching their favorite cartoons, learning the ABCs or playing with toys, Sarah Crocker was discovering a passion for music — and not the kind that comes from a jack-in-the-box. When the Franklin, Tenn., native first heard a harp, she immediately told her parents she wanted to take lessons.

Fifteen years later, Crocker is the University of Alabama's only harpist. Having napped in Moody Music Building practice rooms, she harps on the fact that it takes "massive amounts of time and dedication to hone and perfect any art form, especially music."

"Pursuing a degree in music and other art forms is very challenging because you have to learn how to balance practice and rehearsals in addition to other core classes not related to your particular major," she said. "I am very appreciative of students who attend performances. It makes my hard work worth it to have support from other students."

Kappa Alpha Theta sorority sister, Rachel English, said Crocker is one of the most dedicated people she knows.

"If there is ever a harpist needed, she is the only one who can do it. She can't call in sick one day and let another harpist take over," English explained.

Crocker's love for the harp is evident to all those around her.

"Sarah always completes her many duties without complaining," English said. "She often jokes that she should keep her things at Moody since she is there so often."

Crocker doesn't mind her busy schedule or the fact that her performances are in high demand. Playing in churches, hospitals and nursing homes and at receptions and commencement has given Crocker a greater adoration for her art.

"Being able to share my music with people during these special moments makes me love what I do even more," she said.

Her sorority sisters and friends love what she does, too. Crocker has been asked to play in several weddings, and the experiences are helping her inch closer toward her ultimate goal: teaching.

"I started teaching the harp in high school, and my main goal has been to be a teacher ever since then. After I establish my own harp studio, I would love to start my own community music school that will also incorporate many different instruments," she said. "I think educating the community, particularly children, in the arts is extremely beneficial."



Photo by Steve Jones  
Sarah Crocker is the University of Alabama's only harpist.

Crocker thinks a background in music carries over into other areas of life. Having started playing the harp at a young age, she said she's definitely seen the effects of getting an early start in the arts.

"My involvement in the arts has been extremely beneficial in all aspects of my life. Performing has allowed me to travel to many different places and meet many interesting people," she said. "I think playing the harp has allowed me to build character by teaching me to be dedicated and disciplined. I also feel lucky that I can turn something that I love into a lifelong career."

Crocker recently started composing her own music and plans to make a CD this summer.

"Each time I learn a new piece of music, it is a chance for me to express myself artistically. I always challenge myself to develop my own interpretation of the music while also maintaining the composer's original intent for the piece," she said. "The fact that no two people are able to play any piece of music exactly the same is what makes music special and allows it to remain interesting."

When she isn't practicing, Crocker is performing. On March 24, she will perform with the Tupelo Symphony Orchestra. In April, she will play with the Huxford Symphony Orchestra and the Meridian Symphony Orchestra.

As the University's only harpist, Crocker is certainly set apart. According to English, however, she has other qualities that make her unique as well. "Sarah is not only a talented harpist, she is a wonderful friend. She will stand up for what she believes in and stand up for her friends when they need it the most. Even though she is so busy, she still makes time for her friends." Crocker will perform in a senior recital on April 15 at 4 p.m. in the Moody Music Building.

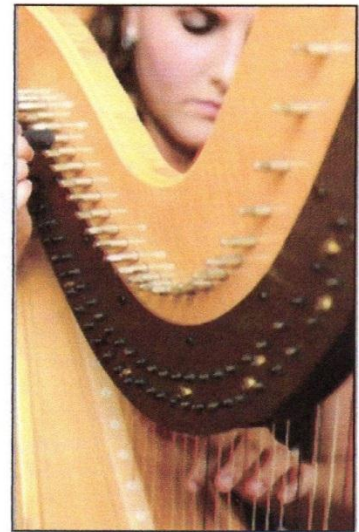


Photo by Steve Jones  
UA student Sarah Crocker fell in love with the harp when she was a child.