

**FANFARE MAGAZINE ARTICLES AND REVIEWS  
(Excerpts)  
BARBARA HARBACH as PERFORMER**

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## HARBACH RECORDINGS MISC. (1980s)

### **FANFARE MAGAZINE ARTICLES AND REVIEWS (Excerpts) BARBARA HARBACH as PERFORMER**

#### ***Fanfare Magazine Issue 40:5 (May/June 2017)* Colin Clarke**

K. HÖLLER *Fantasie*, op. 49.<sup>1</sup> *Triptychon*, op. 64. *Improvisationen*, op. 55<sup>2</sup> • Barbara Harbach (org); <sup>1</sup>William Preucil (vn); <sup>2</sup>Roy Christensen (vc) • MSR 1445 (70:55)

Having reviewed a disc of symphonies by Barbara Harbach (also on MSR) elsewhere in this issue, it is highly rewarding to find her in another guise, as organist, in this disc of music for violin, cello, and organ by Karl Höller (1907–1987). I hadn't heard of him either. Born in Bamberg (Bavaria) to a musical family predominantly populated by organists, he studied with Hermann Zilcher in Würzburg, and then in Munich under Joseph Haas. Escaping conscription in the war, Höller gave the last concert in Bamberg before its capitulation (New Year's Eve, 1944); he also gave the first concert after capitulation in that city (on July 21, 1945). The booklet notes for this recording are brief and say nothing about the actual works on the disc, unfortunately. Höller's orchestral works include two symphonies (1942–46 and 1973), two cello concertos (1940–41 and 1949), inevitably, perhaps, an organ concerto (1930, revised 1966) and a piano concerto (1973). Höller's interest in old forms and music is seen perhaps in his orchestral work *Sweelinck Variations "Mein junges Leben hat ein End"* (1950–51).

William Preucil is the very strong violinist for the op. 49 *Fantasie* of 1949. The long opening violin solo speaks of late Romantic rhetoric; and indeed the dramatic entry of the organ seems to attest to that sense of drama. Preucil has served as concertmaster of the Cleveland Orchestra and first violin of the Cleveland Quartet. His playing is supremely confident, and ensemble between violin and organ throughout is stunning. Höller strips the musical fabric down to nothing around the five-minute mark, to huge effect: There is a stunning sense of the music almost having to rebirth itself. Particularly noteworthy is Preucil's singing tone. Höller provides many long-breathed melodies, and Preucil's sweet sound is the ideal vehicle; his control of his instrument in the final moments, both in the extreme high and low registers, is exemplary.

The neo-Baroque element of Höller comes to the fore in the op. 64 *Triptychon on the Easter sequence "Victimae paschuli laudes"* (no composition date available). Cast in three movements, it forms an

impressive edifice. The opening "Improvisation 'Amen'" is virtuosic in its demands (brilliantly surmounted by Harbach) and also complex in its harmonies. At times the ear is reminded of Hindemith. The longest movement is the central Ricercar, "Dic nobis, Maria." The harmonic movement is such that one could easily get lost; there is almost an element of a vortex about it. The final panel, a Postludium "Amen, Halleluja," is unashamedly grand and celebratory.

The final offering is the op. 55 *Improvisationen* for cello and piano on what the title describes as the Spiritual folksong "Schönster Herr Jesus." The soft-grained organ opening comes in highest contrast to the ending of op. 64. Roy Christensen is the superb solo cellist, possessed of a truly singing tone. If Hindemith cropped up earlier, it is Reger here that seems the most likely reference point. The players find terrific tenderness in the work's first section. Organ with pizzicato cello accompaniment is the basis of the next section, a fascinating, somehow disembodied experience. The movements are all clearly separated, the most overtly lyrical being the third, featuring high-lying, cantabile cello. Christensen's first attack in the penultimate movement is viscerally experienced; one wonders how close the microphone was to him. Yet his high register is perfectly caught in the final, and by some way the longest, movement. It is also in this movement that Höller is at his most enigmatic; there is something, yes, "spiritual" about the way the music seems to float, as if suspended.

Throughout, Harbach plays on the 1913 M. P. Möller organ at the First Church of Christ Scientist in Buffalo, New York, a four-manual instrument. It is notable that the echo division is located at the opposite end of the church. The recording is excellent; it is digitally remastered and dates from 1989.

There seems to be precious little Karl Höller available in the catalog at present, although I am aware of a release on the Comitati Grandi Maestri label that includes the op. 27 Music for Violin and Piano performed by violinist Aldo Ferraresi (unhelpfully one piece in a 10-disc set, a set which equally unhelpfully sported no catalog number). Both Amazon and ArkivMusic list performances of Höller's *Symphonic Fantasy on a Theme by Frescobaldi*, op. 20 and the *Sweelinck Variations*, op. 56 from a DG original featuring Eugen Jochum and the Bavarian Radio Symphony (458602). I should also point out to the reader that wants to investigate Karl Höller pre-purchase that one can hear the Jochum release on Spotify, and that an excerpt from the cello piece on the present album is available free on the MSR web site. With such a paucity of works available, MSR's offering really is rather delicious.

**Fanfare Magazine Issue 40:5 (May/June 2017)**  
**David DeBoor Canfield**

K. HÖLLER *Fantasie*, op. 49.<sup>1</sup> *Triptychon*, op. 64. *Improvisationen*, op. 55<sup>2</sup> • Barbara Harbach (org); <sup>1</sup>William Preucil (vn); <sup>2</sup>Roy Christensen (vc) • MSR 1445 (70:55)

Recently, I attended a concert by the Cleveland Orchestra, which had come down to Bloomington for its bi-annual residency at Indiana University. The orchestra's concertmaster is William Preucil, and his extended solo in the second movement of Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 2 (brilliantly performed by the orchestra and Yefim Bronfman) reminded me of the fact that I dearly wished that more of Preucil's artistry was available on CD. Well, here I am three days later reviewing a disc that features him and his colleagues, cellist Roy Christiansen and organist Barbara Harbach, both of whose artistry I also admire, in a program of music by the German composer-organist-conductor Karl Höller. I'm not saying, however, that this is a newly recorded CD, since it actually is a reissue of the original Gasparo disc, issued back in 1991, and reviewed in that year by *Fanfare's* Scott Wheeler in 14:6. Wheeler didn't much care for Höller's music, but given that I'd heard other works of his over the years that I'd liked, I was determined to approach it with an open mind.

His *Fantasie* for Violin and Organ begins with an extended violin solo, effectively showcasing Preucil's incomparable artistry (his student performance of the Beethoven Violin Concerto, given as one of his required recitals for his degree at Indiana University, I thought was the best performance I'd ever heard of the work, as I sat listening to it, as a graduate student). After a minute, the organ enters, and the tempo of the piece picks up. Like most works with such a title, this 19-minute fantasia has a number of contrasting sections and moods. The style of the writing is quite tonal, albeit with not infrequent excursions into abstruse sonorities derived from near-clusters of pitches in the organ. Fortunately, Höller knew enough to restrain the organ from overpowering the violin, although I suspect that in some of its louder passages, the engineers had a hand in insuring the violin part would be heard. Contrary to Wheeler, I *do* like this music. If the composer has any weakness, it might be his rather constant shifting of styles—sometimes you're hearing figuration and chords reminiscent of Hindemith, and at others, Messiaen-like sonorities, and at still others, Bach with updated harmonies—but I do believe that there is an organic consistency and flow to the piece despite this fact, and I don't actually hear this stylistic shifting as a flaw. Of course, the superlative artistry of Preucil and Harbach could make the phone book sound like a masterpiece, were it somehow transcribed to musical pitches.

Höller's *Tryptichon* for solo organ forms the centerpiece of this recital. Here, Harbach is allowed to pull out all the stops, and the opening almost knocks the listener out of his chair. The M. P. Moller organ found in the First Church of Christ Scientist in Buffalo, NY, is an impressive, even if not particularly large (it has but 42 ranks) instrument. The work's opening movement is improvisatory in nature, and indeed is entitled "Improvisation 'Amen.'" Since the notes don't favor us with even one word about the pieces themselves (I did find the essay on the composer illuminating: He came from a long line of organists and composers, for instance), I can give but my aural impressions of each of these works. The second movement is entitled "Ricercar 'Dic nobis, Maria,'" and is a quiet and meditative essay with a dramatic high point that comes at mid-point, while the *Tryptichon*'s concluding "Postludium 'Amen, Alleluja'" forms an exuberant and exciting conclusion to this work which amounts to a symphony in its scope and style. The style of this fascinating work is more consistently within the mid-20th-century ambit of the German music of composers such as Hindemith, Boris Blacher, and Günther Bialas, with healthy doses of contemporary chromatic counterpoint at certain points. I would say, however, that some of the rapid figuration in the final movement sounds a bit more French to my ears than German.

The survey of Höller's organ and organ-accompanied works concludes with his *Improvisations* for cello and organ. This five-movement suite is based on the spiritual folksong *Schönster Herr Jesus* and is by turns elegiac, powerful, and lively. Since I didn't recognize the tune in this setting, it is difficult for me to pinpoint exactly how the composer uses it here, but I found the piece very satisfying. The second movement features an unusual device, for instance—a walking pizzicato line in the lower range of the cello, over which complex chords are played in the organ's upper register. Not many composers have written for the combination of cello and organ (I recall only offhand a piece by Louis Vierne), but the combination works exceedingly well, and Roy Christiansen's consummate artistry is on full display throughout the 23-minute suite.

I don't have the original Gasparo issue of this disc with which to compare this reissue, but I find no fault in any aspect of its production, other than the omission of any discussion of the works heard herein. I consider Höller's music elegant and profound, and the performances it receives here simply cannot be surpassed.

**Fanfare Magazine Issue 39:4 (Mar/Apr 2016)**  
**Jerry Dubins**

BACH Prelude and Fugue in E<sub>b</sub>, BWV 552, "St. Anne." Toccata and Fugue in F, BWV 540. Chorale Preludes: *An Wasserflüssen Babylon*, BWV 653; *O Mensch, beweine deine Sünde groß*, BWV 622. Prelude and Fugue in c, BWV 546. Fantasia and Fugue in g, BWV 542. Prelude and Fugue in e, BWV 548, "Wedge" • Barbara Harbach (org) • MSR 1444 (74:40)

Before delving into the actual review of this release, I feel the reader is owed an explanation of its provenance. The words "Digitally remastered" printed on the spine were the giveaway that this was not a new recording. And while MSR apparently does not want us to know the recording dates, since they're nowhere to be found, small print on the back plate does reveal that the original source for these recordings is a conflation of two Gasparo LPs, GS-237 and GS-262C. So I looked them up.

GS-237 was recorded on the Schlicker tracker organ at the First Evangelical Lutheran Church in Lyons, New York, in 1983. The organ was built in 1970. BWV numbers 542, 546, 548, and 653, listed in the above headnote, were taken from that LP for this digitized CD. Two other works on the original LP—the Fantasia and Fugue in A Minor, BWV 561, and the Chorale Prelude *In dir ist Freude*, BWV 622, were not included on the present disc. I was not able to ascertain the full contents of the second disc, GS-262C, but assume it had to contain at least the three items selected for the present CD, listed in the above headnote as BWV numbers 552, 540, and 653. It was recorded on the Fisk organ at the Downtown Presbyterian Church in Rochester, New York, in 1987. Construction of the organ was completed in 1982.

Two aspects of this release motivated me to want to review it. First, Pennsylvania-born organist Barbara Harbach made a very strong impression on me with her performance and recording of Bach's *The Art of Fugue*, reviewed in 38:2. For that recording, originally made in 1989, Harbach chose the same Fisk organ in Rochester, a splendid specimen of three manuals plus pedal, 39 stops, 56 ranks, and 2,625 pipes. And that brings me to my second reason for wanting to hear Harbach in this Bach compilation.

Recently, I reviewed a Bach organ recital disc by Todd Fickley and a new version of Saint-Saëns's "Organ" Symphony by Marc Soustrot conducting the Malmö Symphony Orchestra with Carl Adam Landström at the organ. Both of those recordings relied on the "Hauptwerk" virtual software program to reproduce the organs. For a full explanation, see the Fickley Bach review in 38:6. The short explanation is that all possible sonorities of a given organ in its own acoustic space are recorded and stored by the "Hauptwerk" program. An organist then sitting at a console in a concert hall, say, in Wichita, Kansas, using the "Hauptwerk" computer, can reproduce the sound of, say,

the famous Schnitger organ in its own ambient setting of St. Michael's Church in Zwolle, The Netherlands. For a solo organ recital, I guess this makes sense, since it would be no different than listening to a recording that was actually made on the organ in Zwolle, even though the organist might be sitting at a console hooked up to the "Hauptwerk" program in his own living room.

What seems more difficult to reconcile is the above-mentioned Saint-Saëns recording, in which Landström, using the "Hauptwerk" software, "virtually" plays the Cavallé-Coll organ of the Saint-Etienne Abbaye in Caen, France. Even though Landström and the orchestra are playing together in real time, I don't see how this is any different from dubbing in the organ part from another location. The end result is the same: the sound of two different acoustic spaces commingling.

I recap this because it explains my desire to hear an organist playing an organ *in situ*. For those who may not be familiar with Barbara Harbach, she is not only one of America's leading contemporary organists; she is also a harpsichordist, teacher, and composer of note. Her interest especially in women musicians and composers led her to found both *Women in the Arts-St. Louis*, to highlight women in the arts, and *Vivace Press*, to publish music by underrepresented composers. She is also a cofounder of the journal *Women of Note Quarterly*. As an organist, Harbach is by no means a Bach or Baroque specialist. Her repertoire and discography are quite diverse, including a good deal of organ music by 20th-century American composers, such as Daniel Pinkham, Walter Piston, Leo Sowerby, and Samuel Adler.

The disc at hand offers a collection of Bach organ "favorites," avoiding some of the most commonly encountered works, such as the dictionary definition of a Bach organ work, the D-Minor Toccata and Fugue, BWV 565, which according to some sources may not even be by Bach. What a shock that would be! It would be like finding out that God didn't write the Ten Commandments.

The popular, so-called "St. Anne" Prelude and Fugue isn't exactly a joined pair, or at least Bach didn't originally intend them to be heard as such. The majestic Prelude, one of Bach's longest, served as the "overture," if you will, to the *Clavier-Übung*, Part III, aka *German Organ Mass*; while the Fugue, some hours later, concluded the service. The "St. Anne," along with the Toccata and Fugue in F Major, BWV 540, the Prelude and Fugue in C Minor, BWV 546, and the chorale prelude *An Wasserflüssen Babylon*, BWV 653, are heard on the Schlicker organ in Lyons, New York, an instrument of fairly modest size—only two manuals plus pedal and 24 stops—which, nonetheless, makes a very robust sound in its acoustic space as captured by the recording. Harbach, of course, has a lot to do with that. Hers is a big, bold, colorful style of playing that makes maximum use of the resources at

her disposal. This is playing of a manner that harks back to the approach of E. Power Biggs, and, as an antidote to some “historically informed” performances, I find it personally quite thrilling.

Beginning with the chorale prelude *O Mensch, beweine deine Sünde groß*, BWV 622, and continuing with the Fantasia and Fugue in G Minor, BWV 542, and the Prelude and Fugue in E Minor, BWV 548, nicknamed “The Wedge,” we find ourselves at the Downtown Presbyterian Church in Rochester, New York, listening to the Fisk organ, the specifications for which were given earlier. This is a very different sound—sharper, drier, not as given to spread, and very tightly focused. As organs go, it’s quite a new instrument (1983) and it reflects what I think is a modern sound well suited to contemporary music. It is also excellent, as is Harbach, at delineating Bach’s contrapuntal voices. You can almost visualize the lines in Harbach’s realization of the G-Minor Fugue.

All of these works have, of course, been played to death by organists of every persuasion on organs of every period and design. But Barbara Harbach brings her own special artistry to this music, and on a couple of outstanding organs that are very exhilarating to hear—one of them, a Fisk by an all-American company established in Gloucester, Massachusetts only in 1961; and the other, a Schlicker, also an American company, but founded in 1930 by a third-generation builder who had studied organ building in Germany, France, and Denmark, and who combined in his instruments the characteristic properties of the great European organ building traditions. Harbach is a wonderful player—which I already knew from her *The Art of Fugue*—and this disc is easily recommended to anyone who loves Bach’s organ music performed with all the stops pulled out.

***Fanfare Magazine Issue 39:2 (Nov/Dec 2015)***  
**Want List for Bertil van Boer (2015)**

SOLER Harpsichord Sonatas • Harbach • MSR 1300

**Excerpt:**

Padre Antonio Soler was one of those seminal figures in this period whose keyboard works were considered to be the epitome of taste and variety. In this 14-disc set (a monumental undertaking to be sure), harpsichordist Barbara Harbach has recorded the complete sonatas, which have an extreme range from single-movement pieces that reflect modes and counterpoint to fully mature three-movement Classical forms. Here, she has chosen wisely to limit herself to a single instrument, the harpsichord, noting in the excellent booklet that other keyboards, from clavichord to organ, were probably equally as valid. Soler's music is always inventive, even when he is at his pedagogical best, and these works are replete with unusual harmony, Spanish-flavored paraphrases, and some gorgeous lyrical melodies.

**Fanfare Magazine Issue 39:1 (Sept/Oct 2015)**  
**Bertil van Boer**

SOLER Harpsichord Sonatas Nos. 1–120 • Barbara Harbach (hpd) • MSR  
1300 (14 CDs: 1, 041:09)

There is no doubt that Padre Antonio Soler was one of the foremost composers in Spain during the 18th century. Born in Catalonia in 1729, he was schooled as a youth in the monastery of Montserrat at the age of five, and by 1744 had embarked upon a career at a young age at the cathedral in Seo de Urgel, finally becoming a monk in 1752 and then moving to Madrid to become active in the Hieronymite order. His association with the Royal Court meant access to the Royal Family, while his duties at El Escorial as *maestro di capilla* relieved him of the necessity to become involved in the various musical intrigues on the outside. As a result, he was able to hone his skill, achieving a formidable reputation for his theoretical knowledge (including a treatise on modulation written in 1762), and moreover corresponded with some of the musical pedagogues of his time, such as Padre Martini in Bologna.

As a composer, Soler has been most known in our day for his keyboard sonatas, of which at least 120 survive and possibly many more have been lost. Although well known as the doyen of Catalan music during the period, his international reputation has largely been linked with a fellow resident in Madrid, Domenico Scarlatti, whose own collections of keyboard sonatas marked a seminal development in the rise of that genre (not to mention formal and stylistic developments as the Classical period emerged). In this, Soler has often been considered something akin to Scarlatti's lesser colleague, and although there is some slight evidence that Soler might have studied (or at least interacted) with Scarlatti, his music shows not only a penchant for native melodies and rhythms throughout, but also a sequential formal development from single-movement works (such as Scarlatti generally wrote) to full-fledged two- and three-movement sonatas in a mature Classical style.

There are a number of issues surrounding Soler's sonatas that have made their dissemination as a group difficult. First, his music was circulated readily throughout Europe, and while the sources are widespread, they are not always consistent in terms of authenticity, given that no Soler autograph appears to have survived. This means that the bulk of them were disseminated in loose manuscript copies, sometimes with awkward attributions. Musicologist Padre Samuel Rubio has created a seven-volume edition of works, which are used for this recording as they are probably based upon the best musicological research. In terms of which instrument Soler intended, it should be noted that many of the copies only require an

"*instrumento de tecla*," or generic keyboard. This is the same sort of conundrum that one finds with Scarlatti's sonatas, but at least several of the later works dating stylistically from towards the end of the composer's life (he died in 1783) would be better played on a fortepiano rather than a harpsichord or clavichord; I am not certain after hearing them that the suggestion of an organ as another possible alternative is particularly convincing, though of course several of the original manuscripts do mention this instrument. Barbara Harbach has chosen to do this entire set on the harpsichord, which given the uncertainty is probably as close to a ubiquitous keyboard in Europe as one might find during the period. A final ambiguity concerns the title "sonata" itself, given the variety of these works in terms of structure, form, and content. Because this term is so generic to the age, however, it might be a fruitless exercise to try and differentiate the works generically, and thus I find this issue rather moot.

Harbach's project must be seen as a monumental one; although Soler's sonatas have been recorded often before, here the entire Rubio edition is available in a single set in numerical order. (Pieter-Jan Belder has a nine-CD partial set with Brilliant Classics; Gilbert Rowland's complete set for Naxos extends to 13 discs, but presents the sonatas in random order. A parallel Naxos project by Denis Zhdanov is presently recording the sonatas in numerical order on modern piano.) These vary considerably in terms of performance medium and content, but Harbach's edition is probably about as close to a complete one as one might find, despite the fact that Rubio apparently incorporated duplicate movements into some of the sonatas, a practice that is not unknown during the 18th century. Harbach has done the world an immense service by releasing the entire bunch as follows:

Disc 1: Sonatas 1–13 (78:24)  
Disc 2: Sonatas 14–23 (76:03)  
Disc 3: Sonatas 24–35 (77:54)  
Disc 4: Sonatas 36–49 (73:04)  
Disc 5: Sonatas 50–60 (66:48)  
Disc 6: Sonatas 61–63 (75:44)  
Disc 7: Sonatas 64–66 (62:51)  
Disc 8: Sonatas 67–73 (76:27)  
Disc 9: Sonatas 74–83 (74:32)  
Disc 10: Sonatas 84–92 (first two movements) (79:45)  
Disc 11: Sonatas 92 (last two movements)–94 (74:15)  
Disc 12: Sonatas 95–97 (72:59)  
Disc 13: Sonatas 98–106 (76:26)  
Disc 14: Sonatas 107–120 (75:57)

In case one is keeping track of the total time, it is over 1,000 minutes, or 17 hours, of music. Clearly, this is a reference set, to be savored over a larger

amount of time (unless one is inured to marathons by *Der Ring*). To produce this is a labor of love and dedication, and the results are extremely fine. In the extensive booklet notes, Harbach, herself both a musicologist and composer as well as performer, has even given minute descriptions of 36 of her favorites, each of which she outlines in a brief sentence or two as to stylistic and technical contents. But there is more, much more, hidden in all of the sonatas. For example, Sonata 117 has a nicely imitative line that seems to echo Sonata 114, both in Dorian mode, save that the latter twists in rather flexible directions (and makes one wonder if sonatas 114, 115, and 117 ought not to belong together, as they have a musical congruity that is quite apparent, at least to this author). The three-movement sonatas, probably composed somewhat later in his career, are all mature works with good thematic contrasts. For instance, the Sonata 67 in D Major opens with a bell-like theme in which one can imagine the bells of El Escorial, and a lyrical secondary theme that Mozart might have written. This is followed by a lively rondo with cascading triplets that are distinctly gigue-like. The finale is a fugue based upon a theme that wanders, and here Soler makes something that would be hard to imagine as counterpoint into flowing, easy-going tapestry. In the single-movement Sonata 37, subtitled "Pastoril," the mischievous opening trills devolve into a sprightly triple-meter dance that practically evokes bucolic pleasures and gamboling sheep. I even detect a slight Spanish tone to the work, as if one is now out on the *altiplano*. As each of these works is unique and individual, one might reiterate that Harbach has her favorites (all amply and accurately described) but the remainder are all equally as brilliant and interesting in and of themselves. To describe the variety and quality of all of them would, of course, be a more Herculean task, but suffice it to say that each piece is a facet in these sonata gems, ranging from exercises to sensitive depictions of musical emotion.

In terms of the performance, Harbach's playing is precise and crystalline, with each phrase, each turn of harmony, and each ornament clearly and cleanly defined. Even without the monumental aspect of this entire set, her performance is some of the best harpsichord playing I've encountered, for it is articulate and passionate, energetic and careful to bring out all of the hidden subtleties in Soler's music. This set is a must-have, and there is no higher recommendation that I can give. One does not have to absorb all 14 discs all at once, but one can rest assured the temptation with such excellent playing will be to hold a Soler marathon. Get it. Period.

**Fanfare Magazine Issue 38:1 (Sept/Oct 2014)**  
**Bertil van Boer**

BACH *The Art of Fugue*. PACHELBEL Chaconnes: in D; in F. Canon in D. 13 Chorale Preludes • Barbara Harbach (org) • MSR 1442 (2 CDs: 148:53)

As a composer, organist, and scholar, Barbara Harbach is of course quite well known and needs no introduction to either the scholarly world or public at large. She has championed women composers for many years, and she is perhaps solely responsible for an interesting and progressive repertory. Moreover, her journal is well respected and her recordings run a considerable gamut, from the Baroque to contemporary composers. It is therefore somewhat surprising to receive this disc of Bach's iconic *Art of Fugue*. Surely, there is no lack of recordings of this venerable collection, first published in 1751, and counterpoint students for at least a century and a half have diligently studied them. Perhaps it is the use of the Fisk organs in Rochester and Buffalo, New York that ought to be the real focus of this two-disc set, and when one listens, the voicing is indeed rather clear and resonant, though I find them lighter in tone than, say, the larger cathedral organs of Europe upon which many of the current recordings available are performed.

That alone might be an incentive, but what I find more attractive is that the second disc is devoted largely to the music of Johann Pachelbel, whose infamous canon (here also performed) has become arguably the earworm of the century. Harbach at least makes her adaptation a sort of gigantic crescendo that seems particularly apt for the organ, but it still doesn't help the overexposure of the piece. More interesting, however, are the other works, such as the two chaconnes, which like the canon, are based upon ostinato basses. No earworms here, for one can find a solid, even sensitive set of works. The F-Minor Chaconne begins with a soft palette of sounds, wherein the bass line is virtually imperceptible. As the texture begins to build the registrations outline each variation with definition. By the time one gets to the two penultimate variations, the sound has become a surging wave, which then vanishes seemingly into the mist, with a sudden thinning of the texture, to disappear as quietly as it came in the beginning. The D-Major Chaconne has some rather gnarly opening harmonies above the ostinato, which swells until it too attains a massive sound wave, only here it does not vanish but rather concludes triumphantly. The chorale preludes all have a nice sense of contrapuntal line that is often marked by suspensions and chromatic variation. These are every bit as worthy of performance as those by Bach, demonstrating that Pachelbel was no slouch when it came to serious Lutheran church music.

I am quite taken with Harbach's choice of registration, and, as noted, the Fiske organs have a nice transparent sound which in turn allows for the individual lines to become audible. Perhaps such would be (and sometimes are) lost in some of the great cathedral organs, but intimacy replaces grandeur. One has so many versions of *The Art of Fugue* from which to choose, and so this portion of the set might be more of a matter of personal choice, but I would get it solely for the Pachelbel, which, apart from the exorable canon, is something of an eye-opener.

**Fanfare Magazine Issue 38:2 (Nov/Dec 2014)**  
**Jerry Dubins**

BACH *The Art of Fugue. Komm süßter Tod*, BWV 478. PACHELBEL Canon in D (arr. S. Drummond Wolff). Chaconne in F. Chorale Preludes. Chaconne in D • Barbara Harbach (org) • MSR 1442 (2 CDs: 148: 53)

When it comes to Bach's *The Art of Fugue*, the trend over the past 20 years or so has favored performances either in arrangements for various combinations of instruments or for solo harpsichord; and while performances on organ are not exactly an endangered species—I reviewed one by Joan Lippincott in 36:1—the fact of the matter is that the work is not playable in its entirety, as written, by a single player on any keyboard instrument, whether harpsichord, piano, or organ. For in two of the work's numbers, specifically the "mirror" fugues, Nos. XII and XIII, Bach notates "a 2 Clav."—as distinct from a single harpsichord with two manuals—indicating he assumed the presence of a second player. That said, our likes and dislikes, preferences and prejudices, are very often conditioned by first exposures, and my first exposure to *The Art of Fugue* came through Helmut Walcha's 1956 Arkiv Produktion recording on organ. Since then, it's only the organ that seems able to convey to me the sense of grandiosity and high moral purpose I associate with the work.

And so here we have, not quite a new recording of the *The Art of Fugue*, but one made in 1989 by Barbara Harbach playing the Fisk organ (op. 83) in Rochester, New York's Downtown United Presbyterian Church. The organ, completed in 1982, has three manuals plus pedal, 39 stops, 56 ranks, and 2,625 pipes. According to the Eastman School of Music's web page describing the organ's specifications, the design and stop list of this particular Fisk opus "are eclectic, making the organ capable of playing music from all eras, as well as accompanying choral music and supporting congregational singing." This then is not an organ specifically built with Bach in mind. Nonetheless, the sound of the instrument, complemented by its acoustic environment, and most of all Harbach's intelligent and musically appropriate choice of stops and couplings, result in exceptionally clear voicing and detailed delineation of Bach's counterpoint. Where I criticized Lippincott for her stultifying choice of stops and registrations, comparing the colorations of mixes she drew from the instrument's pipes to the tonal characteristics of an electric organ in a funeral parlor, and her dutiful, devotional approach to the effect of shadows cast by flickering votive candles, Harbach's readings are just the opposite—brightly lit, responsive, and devoid of the *vox humana* vibrato that smells of undertakers and embalming fluid. In fact, as I listen to Harbach's *The Art of Fugue*, I find it not that much different from my cherished Walcha version, high praise

indeed for Harbach, a composer, harpsichordist, organist, and professor of music at the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

Without getting bogged down in a lengthy discussion of the various versions of *The Art of Fugue* and the sequencing arrangement of its numbers, I'll just say that Harbach, like most players, follows the order of the later printed edition of four simple fugues (I–IV), three counter fugues (V–VII), four double and triple fugues (VIII–XI), two mirror fugues (XII–XIII), four canons (XIV–XVII), and the uncompleted triple fugue (XVIII). If the 18 Roman numerals don't jibe with Harbach's 20 tracks, it's because the third and fourth canons (XVI and XVII) are each given in *rectus* and *inversus* form on separate tracks, but each pair is counted as only one Roman numeral. The concluding, unfinished fugue is, of course, the one in which Bach uses the notes of his name B-A-C-H (=B $\flat$ -A-C-B $\natural$ ) as the third subject.

There is strong evidence to suggest that Bach had intended to add yet a fourth subject, making this a quadruple fugue, and latter-day musicologists and composers, Michael Ferguson, for one, have had the "audacity" (Ferguson's own word) to offer their own speculative completions. Ferguson poses the question, "not *can* it be completed, but *should* it be completed?" Harbach, like Walcha, apparently believes the answer to that question is "no," for she, too, leaves off exactly where the final fugue ends. This is, quite simply, a magnificent performance of Bach's *The Art of Fugue*, one completely worthy of the magnificent organ on which it's played. Harbach's version will occupy a place on my shelf right next to my prized Walcha. It used to be said that an intellectual was one who could hear Rossini's *William Tell Overture* and not think of the Lone Ranger. It might be time to update that with a more recent definition of an intellectual—that being one who can think of Pachelbel and not think of his Canon, which, for a time, eclipsed Wagner's Wedding March from *Lohengrin* as the music of choice for ushering brides down the aisle. I believe the piece even made it onto the Top 10 Pop Charts, as it was aired repeatedly in various arrangements and souped-up versions.

Here's the lowdown on it. It's believed to have been written circa 1694, possibly for the wedding of Johann Christoph Bach. With greater certainty, it's known to have been originally scored for three violins and continuo, and that the canon was paired with a gigue which followed it. Perhaps not fully appreciated is that the canon, which observes strict canonic imitation at the unison, simultaneously employs chaconne or passacaglia-like procedures in that the canonic entries are constructed over a repeating eight-note ground. Pachelbel and the Bach clan were well acquainted, and there's every reason to believe that Johann Sebastian Bach studied and was familiar with the elder Pachelbel's work. The canons in Bach's *Goldberg Variations* display a

similar technique of imitative points of entry over a ground that informs the entire work.

Pachelbel, like Bach after him, was a highly skilled organist, and much of Pachelbel's known output consists of works for organ, with special emphasis on chorale preludes. After spilling over onto disc two for two tracks, Harbach's *The Art of Fugue* is followed by Bach's aria, *Komm süßer Tod*, BWV 478, then Pachelbel's Canon, sans its gigue, and a Chaconne in F. Harbach then treats us to 13 of Pachelbel's chorale preludes, many based on the same chorale tunes Bach would draw upon for his chorale preludes, such as *Nun komm der Heiden Heiland* and *Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr*. Pachelbel's settings are quite affecting in their devotional sincerity, but they don't "muddy the waters," so to speak, with the chromaticism and contrapuntal complexities that Bach would apply to his chorale prelude settings, which led the Leipzig church rectors to complain and reprimand Bach for confusing the congregation.

Harbach concludes the second disc with another Pachelbel Chaconne, this one in D. All of the Pachelbel items were recorded in August 1990, on a different organ than the Bach works were two years earlier. For the Pachelbel, Harbach takes us to the Fisk organ (op. 95), completed in 1990, in Slee Hall at the State University of Buffalo, New York. "The specifications of Opus 95 are based upon classic and romantic French and German antecedents, but combined in a unique American way that allows for authoritative performance of four centuries of organ music, while inspiring new music as well." The organ has three manuals plus pedal, with 45 stops, 59 ranks, and 2,778 pipes.

Let me conclude with one very minor quibble that has nothing to do with Harbach. Disc one of this set times out at exactly 70 minutes, with the spillover of *The Art of Fugue* on disc two taking another 11:12. That adds up to 81:12, meaning the entire *Art of Fugue* could have been accommodated on a single disc, and the Pachelbel disc could have been released separately for those who wanted it. I'm not saying the Pachelbel pieces aren't nice to have, but tethering them to *The Art of Fugue* seems arbitrary and not particularly pertinent.

Other than that, these are wonderful, commanding performances by Harbach on truly grand-sounding organs and imposing-sounding recordings. Strongly recommended.

**Fanfare Magazine Issue 37:2 (Nov/Dec 2013)**  
**Carson Cooman: Review**

ROSNER *Musique de Clavecin. Sonatine  
d'Amour*. PINKHAM *Partita* • Harbach • MSR 1443

**Excerpt:**

Harpichordist Barbara Harbach (who is also active as an organist and composer) recorded many volumes of contemporary harpsichord music in the early 1990s for the now-defunct Gasparo label. Some of this material is gradually being rereleased. The MSR album includes two of the finest works from Harbach's project—Arnold Rosner's stunning *Musique de Clavecin* (1974) and Daniel Pinkham's seminal *Partita* (1964). Another major work of Arnold Rosner, his dramatic and powerful Symphony No. 8, "Trinity," appears on a disc in Naxos's Wind Band Classics series, performed by the University of Houston Wind Ensemble. Accompanying Rosner's Symphony are several wind ensemble works by Nicolas Flagello, more entries in the discography of this neoromantic American composer whose music has seen a number of strong recordings in recent years.

**Fanfare Magazine Issue 36:6 (July/Aug 2013)**  
**Bertil van Boer**

HAIGH Harpsichord Concertos: No. 1 in D; No. 2 in B $\flat$ ; No. 3 in a; No. 4 in G; No. 5 in C; No. 6 in E $\flat$  • Barbara Harbach (hpd) • MSR 1441 (68:04)

Among the plethora of musical genres during the 18th century, surely one of the least recorded today was that type of work meant solely to be performed in the salons of the well-to-do. Amateur music-making was certainly omnipresent, and publishers rushed to provide this stable and even growing market with works ranging from original chamber music to arrangements and parodies of larger compositions, such as operas or symphonies. Thousands of these were printed, and a number of composers easily made a nice tidy bit of change publishing for these consumers. Thomas Arne, for instance, wrote a number of keyboard concertos with ad libitum instrumental accompaniment. If you got 'em, use 'em; if not, no problem, since the pieces sound just as well with or without. Indeed, even major figures like Joseph Haydn were persuaded to get into the act, as seen by his arrangements of Scottish songs.

This brings us to one of these unknown figures and a pupil of Haydn, Thomas Haigh. Born in 1769 in London, he was probably trained as a violinist by local musicians. As a performer, he was generally present in the various orchestras around town and in the city of Manchester. While in the capital he came into contact with Haydn, to whom he dedicated six keyboard sonatas in 1796. Thereafter he became a popular publisher of light music, much of it based upon various songs and airs of the period. He died in April of 1808 in London, possibly while visiting his publishers. Harpsichordist Barbara Harbach, who herself is a well-known composer, has revived his earliest published works, a set of six concertos for this instrument from 1783, constituting Haigh's op. 1. It is dedicated to Elizabeth, Countess of Mexborough, whose portrait Joshua Reynolds painted a few years earlier. She had just been married, so perhaps this was a means of honoring that event by a young composer seeking some status in his field. The set of six works originally was accompanied by a pair of violins and a bass line (read: violoncello), and while one might consider that any well-endowed household in London of the period could have scrounged up at least these forces, Haigh left nothing to chance by going the traditional route of making the accompaniment optional. This is the way that Harbach has chosen to perform them, but given their particular style, one doesn't miss much with the omission of the stringed instruments. (Of course, this also leaves an opening for some enterprising group to do them with.)

If there is an expectation that these six concertos will appear profound because of the ingenuity and depth of musical content, this ought to be discarded right now. These are meant only for entertainment, and they reflect this purpose exactly. There is no drama, no progressive technical advancements in form, structure, or harmony, no attempt at uniqueness. They are exactly what they purport to be: competent pieces with pleasant themes using some of the more recognizable stylistic traits (say, from Mannheim or from resident composers in London like Johann Christian Bach), energetic rhythmic structures that tend to be either ostinatos or Alberti bass, and requiring a modest technical proficiency. They are also meant to be heard in genteel society. In other words, the concertos are pure entertainment music with no strings attached, which in turn makes them delightful and familiar. They are the comfort food of the 18th century. With two exceptions, each follows the three-movement format, and only one, the A-Minor Concerto, begins with a rather solemn, if conventional dotted French overture slow movement. One finds embedded within every other opening movement some nice, predictable themes, devices such as unison rises or falls along the triad, a sort of maniacal ostinato in what are obviously ritornello sections, and little dynamic change or elaborate ornamentation. In the B $\flat$ - and E $\flat$ -Concertos, both the first and second movements begin with roughly the same musical material, providing a sort of mnemonic continuity. Where Haigh really shines, however, is in the rondos, each of which seems to be based upon popular song material. He has a positive knack for making these sprightly tunes earworms, with numerous internal variations that are remarkable for both variety and lack of pretense to something greater.

Harbach's playing is delightful, relentless, and in strict tempo when the music demands, backing off when her "solo" parts come in with their only slightly varied lines. She performs each of the fast movements energetically, and the slow movements with considerable grace. My only preference is that Harbach should have made more use of the dual keyboard and stops for the sake of contrast, but since one might not have expected the various original performers to have done this, it is not something worth more than a passing mention.

If you are looking for the power and depth of a Mozart, let this disc go. For anyone else who is, especially in the 18th-century sense, looking for sheer joyous entertainment, you should obtain this excellent disc.

**Fanfare Magazine Issue 36:4 (Mar/Apr 2013) of  
Lynn René Bayley**

ROSNER *Musique de Clavecin. Sonatine d'amour*. PINKHAM Partita for Harpsichord • Barbara Harbach (hpd) • MSR CLASSICS 1443 (64:11)

This disc is the reissue of a 1990 CD that originally came out on the Gasparo label (I found only one link that dated Gasparo as far forward as 2005, but could not find conclusive evidence that the label is now defunct). Both are works by modern American composers for the harpsichord: one written essentially for the composer's own satisfaction to portray certain women he knew through his chess club correspondence or friends' wives, the other commissioned as background music for a public television show in Boston that never aired. Moreover, the styles of the two composers could not be more different. Rosner's music is eclectic but essentially tonal (in this case, however, most of it sounds very Eastern, like Turkish or Arabic music) while Pinkham's is decidedly atonal or at least multi-tonal. Also, Rosner's music is much more mood-oriented while Pinkham's is more complex in construction.

To go into more detail, the Rosner suite—composed in 1974—is divided into five parts: "Rondeau: *La Dame du Seigneur*," which the composer says refers to a woman who "had a great love of baroque music and, despite her youth, an intense bitterness about life altogether, though she was also capable of great warmth"; "Danse: *La Walewska*," referring to a piano and music theory student of Polish heritage who, sadly, died in a plane crash in August 2012; "Fantaisie: *La Celeste*," describing a woman with "jet-black hair...exceedingly beautiful...though the compelling look in her eyes was at first alluring and later frightening"; "Noel: *Les Suzannes*," so named because several of his friends "had married women named Susan"; and "Passacille: *La douleureuse*," referring to another chess club member, a "doctoral candidate in French" who "was passionately physical and possessed of unusual vitality and energy." In some passages, I felt that Harbach's harpsichord was recorded a bit too close, as the thumping sound it produced seemed to me a bit heavy-handed for the music's intended purpose, but the performance is splendid. This was followed by a shorter Rosner piece, *Sonatine d'Amour*, which he wrote specifically to evoke the "special sensuous vibrancy in the sound of the harpsichord." In all of the Rosner pieces there is an unusual quality that is extremely difficult to describe. The closest I can come is to compare it to the odd harpsichord music in the background of Ernie Kovacs's half-hour comedy classic, *Eugene*. But it's good stuff.

Daniel Pinkham's Partita for Harpsichord was commissioned as a repeated half-hour of music to run behind WGBH's proposed series on "A Layman's Guide to Modern Art." The film series was never accepted for distribution,

but WGBH gave Pinkham permission to release his pre-recorded performance on Cambridge Records in 1962, and it also became a concert piece for him. His music is much more formally constructed, using such typical baroque structures as a toccata, fugue, three different canons, a rondo, a fantasia, scherzo, and a last section mysteriously marked "Envoi." Less emotionally effusive than Rosner's music but no less fascinating, Pinkham creates some truly fascinating rhythmic-harmonic structures. For the most part they are tonal, but they often veer into sideways harmonics and, at times (like in the *Andante*), the rhythm really swings, coming close to jazz without really mimicking it.

One of the more fascinating aspects of this CD is the manner in which Harbach, who is herself a composer, manages to elicit a tremendous range of moods from the harpsichord. Since the dynamic range of her instrument is rather circumscribed by comparison with a piano, she manages to do this by means of registration changes and inserting pauses in the musical line. I found her touch and style endlessly fascinating to listen to even though, as noted earlier, some of these passages were recorded a little too close to the mike for my taste. This is *not* easy listening music for your next Sunday brunch or "party with a purpose"; the music is often too complex, demanding of the listener, and even somewhat dark in mood to serve that purpose. All for the better, because this is one of the most fascinating discs ever to come my way for review.

**Fanfare Magazine Issue 32:6 (July/Aug 2009)**  
**J. F. Weber**

*TOCCATAS, FLOURISHES & FUGUES* • Barbara Harbach (org) • MSR 1254  
(65:32)

Harbach plays an Aeolian-Skinner organ at the Christ Church cathedral in St. Louis. The 24 selections are original or (mostly) arranged from old hymn tunes and traditional melodies. This is Volume 3 (the only organ recital) of a projected seven discs of Harbach's music for various ensembles, so the focus is on Harbach. She uses a few familiar techniques to handle the tunes, often ending with a fugue. A Finale obviously meant to conclude a service is a *tour de force*, she says, for double pedal with toccata in the manuals that is quite impressive for its brevity. Similarly, a Fantasy and Fugue on *Swing low, sweet chariot*, the only work dated before 2001, serves the same purpose at greater length. Some of the hymn tunes are treated meditatively. The 70-rank organ has that familiar Aeolian-Skinner sound that G. Donald Harrison created so brilliantly, though this was not one of his designs. This is a very enjoyable organ recital, the tunes just familiar enough and the treatment just novel enough to sustain interest throughout. Splendid sound.

**Fanfare Magazine Issue 32:1 (Sept/Oct 2008)**  
**Lynn René Bayley**

BON Keyboard Sonatas: No. 1 in g; No. 2 in B $\flat$ ; No. 3 in F; No. 4 in C; No. 5 in b; No. 6 in C • Barbara Harbach (hpd) • MSR 1241 (64:43)

Even among the ranks of obscure women composers, Anna Bon—who listed herself in her folios as Anna Bon di Venezia—is one of its greatest mysteries. Her parents were, apparently, successful theater people, her mother as an opera singer and her father as a stage designer. All three were employed by Prince Nikolaus von Esterhazy, who probably promoted the publication of her three folios of music. These six sonatas, her op. 2, is the middle set of these. The album's notes, apparently written by Harbach, give her date of death as 1767 only because that's the last year anything was known of her, but she was only 27 years old at the time and the "last thing known about her" was her marriage to an Italian tenor.

I tend to cut women composers of any era before the end of the 19th century some slack for several reasons. With few exceptions (Fanny Mendelssohn probably being the most famous), they seldom had access to the same first-rate musical education accorded to men. Their music was expected, by nature of their being women, to be more elegant, more decorous, less cutting-edge than their male counterparts. And, of course, they seldom had access to music publishers unless they were truly exceptional figures of their age (such as Elisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre) or, in Anna Bon's case, a powerful and high-ranking mentor. What strikes the ear of the listener in these works is not much in the way of innovation or brilliance so much as a liveliness of spirit and a certain playfulness that I found charming. The left-hand accompaniments are particularly varied, ranging from single-note ostinatos to fully developed countermelodies in the style of Purcell or Handel. There are many unexpected flurries of 16ths and triplets in the right hand that are sometimes unexpected. Occasionally Bon ends her movements in the low range of the keyboard, introduces false recapitulations, or uses diminished chords or deceptive cadences. The problem, as I heard it, is that there is a great deal of repetition in these short works, but who knows how she might have developed? It's important to remember that when she published these sonatas, she was only 17 years old! Aside from a transcendent genius like Mozart or Mendelssohn, how many 17-year-old composers do you know who could write pieces this good, even with their conventionalities?

The first one, the Sonata in G Minor, is in many ways the weakest and most repetitive, but the others all have interesting moments. More important, Barbara Harbach is a splendid musician whose commitment to excellence as

a performer informs all of this music with not only Bon's evident spirit of fun but also her contrasting moods of reflection and energy. In other words, she has taken fairly ordinary music with a few extraordinary moments and made it all sound rather excellent by virtue of her interpretive brilliance and total identification with the material. Just listen to the way she plays the closing Allegro of Sonata No. 2, for instance, or the unusual dragging sound she imparts to the Adagio of Sonata No. 3 (played with the damper on the strings of her instrument). This is extraordinary harpsichord-playing by any measure. I would buy this recording just to hear this woman play, almost regardless of musical quality, because she elevates every note and phrase into a realm beyond the written score. The recorded sound, close to the instrument but not unduly magnified, gives you the aural pleasure of being in her kitchen, so to speak.

This album is a triumph for Harbach and a vindication of her decision to record these works. I'm usually a sucker for good harpsichord-playing anyway, so for me to hear an artist of this high a caliber overcomes any reticence I may have towards the material.

**Fanfare Magazine Issue 30:2 (Nov/Dec 2006)**  
**Jerry Dubins**

BERLINSKI *From the World of My Father*.<sup>1</sup> *Shofar Service*.<sup>2</sup> *The Burning Bush*.<sup>3</sup> *Symphonic Visions*<sup>4</sup> • Gerard Schwarz, cond;<sup>1, 4</sup> Seattle SO;<sup>1</sup> Ted Christopher (bar);<sup>2</sup> James Ghigi (tpt);<sup>2</sup> Stephen Keavy (tpt);<sup>2</sup> Tim Roseman (shofar);<sup>2</sup> Christopher Bowers-Broadbent (org);<sup>2</sup> Avner Itai, cond;<sup>2</sup> Barbara Harbach (org);<sup>3</sup> Barcelona SO/Nat'l O of Catalonia<sup>4</sup> • NAXOS 8.559446  
(55:32)

**Excerpt:**

*The Burning Bush*, a reference to the Biblical narrative in which Moses has his first meeting with God, who appears to him in the desert in the form of a shrub engulfed in flames but that is not consumed, is an extended virtuoso cadenza for solo organ that Berlinski was commissioned to write in 1956 to inaugurate Temple Emanu-El's new Casavant organ. There is much of the late 19th- and early 20th-century Franco-Belgian organ school in the piece, not to mention the influence of one of Berlinski's mentors, Messiaen. With its grinding dissonances and seemingly pointless harmonic excursions, it's not music that falls particularly graciously upon these ears, but as a demonstration piece for organ, it fulfills its mission. If you are a Messiaen devotee (though the French composer's music is of a more mystical bent), you may be more predisposed to the piece than I was. Barbara Harbach puts the five-manual, 205-rank, Möller organ at the Calvary Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, through its paces in an awesome performance of a less than awe-inspiring piece.

**Fanfare Magazine Issue 19:3 (Jan/Feb 1996)**  
**Elliott S. Hurwitt**

*SONATAS BY ELIZABETH. MUSIC BY GAMBARINI AND HARDIN.* • Barbara Harbach, harpsichord. • HESTER PARK CD 7702 [DDD]; 72:58. Produced by Jonathan Yordy.

GAMBARINI Sonatas: No. 1 in G; No. 2 in D; No. 3 in F; No. 4 in G; No. 5 in C; No. 6 in D Minor. HARDIN. Lessons: No. 4 in E; No. 5 in G; No. 6 in B $\flat$ ; No. 1 in C; No. 2 in A; No. 3 in D.

Barbara Harbach has had an exceptionally productive musical career in recent years. One of the better harpsichordists and organists in the country, she has a prominent profile as a broadcaster on radio and television in the Pacific Northwest. In addition to holding a professorship, she is active as an editor and scholar and is the founder of *Women of Note Quarterly*. Harbach's efforts on behalf of women composers make up only a small part of her activities. She is interested in eighteenth-century keyboard music in general, and is also a strong proponent of several twentieth-century composers. Her numerous recordings covering these areas are an important resource. Not everything she records is of equal quality, but she has brought much obscure (and excellent) music to the public's attention. Harbach is no fair-weather friend. Her loyalty to composers she admires, such as Samuel Adler, is precisely the sort of advocacy needed to get their names established.

The present disc represents another sortie in Harbach's ongoing crusade to recover the work of eighteenth-century women composers of music for the harpsichord. (These now appear on her own Hester Park label.) The two composers heard here will be unfamiliar to most listeners, and indeed the information available on them is limited. I wouldn't be surprised if much of it was ferreted out by Harbach herself. There are better eighteenth-century women composers than the two on this disc, as Harbach herself is certainly aware. (Elizabeth Jacquet de la Guerre, probably the best of her time, is no longer obscure to harpsichord fanciers.) In fact Harbach herself has recorded better eighteenth-century women composers than the two featured here. One of her earlier discoveries, Cecilia Barthélemon, is particularly impressive.

I wish I could say the same for the first composer on this disc, Elisabetta de Gambarini (1731-65). This multitalented woman packed a tremendous amount of activity into her short life, singing and conducting as well as composing and playing the harpsichord. (She was also apparently a painter!) Gambarini must have enjoyed a considerable vogue as a musician during her adolescence. Her six sonatas (or "lessons") recorded here were published

while she was still a teenager (unless, like some prodigies, she was understating her age). The subscribers to the volume included leading London composers of the time, Handel, Geminiani, and Maurice Greene among them. How much of their interest was rooted in the quality of the music itself is difficult to say. Handel employed her as a soprano in a number of his later works, so he may have been showing professional courtesy in subscribing to her publication.

Most of the music here is middling stuff. Gambarini wrote in the Rococo manner that was stylish by the 1740s. Thus the light two-part texture that prevails throughout these pieces probably results as much from the deliberate adoption of a manner as from any technical inability. The limitations of both the style and the composer's invention are apparent from the opening notes of the Allegretto that begins Sonata No. 1 in G. The closing Giga from the same work shows off Gambarini's flair for the lighter manner. But much of this music lacks character. The evocation of hunting horns in the Allegretto from Sonata No. 2 in D is saved from cliché only by the unexpected deployment of some tangy dissonant chords. There are occasional flashes of vigor, as in the Allegro from Sonata No. 6 in D Minor, and beauty, as in the Adagio from Sonata No. 3 in F. The Allegro Moderato that opens this piece is one of Gambarini's best moments on this disc, full of character and intelligence. This is also one of two very English-sounding movements in the set, the other being the March from Sonata No. 4 in G. But then Gambarini was a Londoner after all, despite her name. Since her primary fame was based on her work as a singer, it would be interesting to hear some of her original songs before making an evaluation of her as a composer.

Elizabeth Hardin, who flourished in the 1770s, is more obscure than Gambarini, but on the evidence here was a more interesting composer. About all Harbach is able to tell us is that she was the organist of St. Peter-le-Poor church in London. I believe women organists were a very small group in the eighteenth century. Hardin was undoubtedly a less glamorous figure than Gambarini, more of a workaday professional musician. From the opening of her Lesson No. 4 in E (the first heard here) it is immediately apparent that her music is stronger than Gambarini's. Hardin's superiority is partly a simple matter of more highly developed skills. Although a two-part texture is used predominantly throughout, Hardin handled chord progressions and sequences with complete assurance. There is nothing in Gambarini's set to match the nicely written transitions in the Minuet from Lesson No. 6 in B $\flat$  by Hardin. The Minuet from Lesson No. 5 in G is better constructed and more sustained in its invention than much of the music of its time. Hardin's strength is also partly a matter of temperament. The Allegro from the same Lesson No. 5 is full of charm. Best of all is the Allegro

from Lesson No. 1 in C, solid, forthright, and uplifting. Hardin is a discovery, and her music is worth the price of the disc.

Barbara Harbach has given us something valuable here. This disc does not represent the best music she has brought to our attention, but then, the competition is stiff: in addition to neglected women composers like Barthélemon, strong contemporary masters such as Samuel Jones, Dan Locklair, and Arnold Rosner. The new disc provides a valuable service in bringing Gambarini and Hardin to the fore, even if Hardin so clearly outshines her sister composer. Harbach plays this music with the assurance one would expect from the world's leading authority on the material. Her liner notes are ideally informative. The sound on this generous disc is clean and attractive. I give it a measured recommendation to the general collector. The many new students of music by women composers should snap it up at once.

**Fanfare Magazine Issue 14:6 (July/Aug 1991)**  
**Scott Wheeler**

HÖLLER Organ Music. • Barbara Harbach, organ; William Preucil, violin <sup>1</sup>; Roy Christensen, cello <sup>2</sup>. • GASPARO GSCD-278 [DDD]; 70:55. Produced by Roy Christensen. (Distributed by Allegro.)

Organist and harpsichordist Barbara Harbach is a musician with wide-ranging interests. I loved both the music and the performances on her collection *of American Hymn Preludes* by Adler, Read, and Schuman (reviewed in *Fanfare* 14:3). Her catalog on Gasparo includes no less than three discs of contemporary music for harpsichord, and a collection of keyboard music by eighteenth-century women. This is a musician who has ideas, who does her homework, and who follows through with strong and musical performances. She is like a Neeme Järvi of organ and harpsichord—I'm a fan.

Unfortunately, Harbach's advocacy has not made me a fan of German composer Karl Höller (b. 1907). Höller, whose name is new to me, is an organist and was for many years president of the Munich Music Academy. He seems to be in the honorable tradition of the German Kappelmeister. In fact, Holler's family, like Bach's, has had four generations of organists. Holler's music is consciously in Bach's tradition—mostly imitative counterpoint with nineteenth-century chromatics. This style of twentieth-century music makes Hindemith seem like a radical. Like many organist-composers, Höller has the handy liturgical knack of extending his pieces to fill time. A number of passages, particularly in the thirteen-minute *Ricercar "Die nobis, Maria,"* sound exactly like the filler an organist would come up with while we wait for a shuffling old priest. Digressions are leisurely and frequent. The organ solo *Triptychon* seems to go on for days.

I've never heard an organ-violin duo before, and now maybe I know why. In Holler's *Fantasie*, an elephantine prelude-and-fugue-with-digressions, Harbach's mammoth organ strives (successfully, really) for flexibility and expression, whereas the tiny violin reaches out (all too successfully) for weight and emphasis. The recording engineers probably shared the performers' understandable fear that the violin wouldn't be heard. They may have overcompensated—at times it sounds like we're standing next to a concerto soloist with the orchestra on the other side of the room.

Things are better in balance for *Improvisationen* for cello and organ, which is also a gentler and more successful piece. Of its five movements, only the last one, nine minutes long, wears out its welcome. I particularly like the playing of cellist Roy Christensen.

**Fanfare Magazine Issue 14:5 (May/June 1991)**  
**Paul A. Snook**

PISTON Sonata for Violin and Harpsichord. MILHAUD Sonata for Violin and Harpsichord. ADLER Sonata No. 2 for Violin and Harpsichord. MARTINU Promenades, for Violin, Flute, and Harpsichord. RUBBRA Fantasy on a Theme of Machaut, for Flute, Harpsichord and String Quartet. Cantata Pastorale, for Tenor, Flute, Cello and Harpsichord. DVOŘÁK Bagatelles, for String Trio and Harmonium. • Charles Castleman, violin; Bonita Boyd, flute; Barbara Harbach, harpsichord; Julie Gigante, violin; Virginia Lenz, viola; Pamela Frame, cello; Tony Bouté, tenor. • ALBANY Troy 041 [ADD]; 75:15.

**Excerpt:**

Castleman acquits himself with his customary musicianship and expressive flair—and his various collaborators meet him on the same high and accomplished plateau. They are all obviously playing for love of these particular carefully selected scores, with no hint of the perfunctory.

**Fanfare Magazine Issue 14:3 (Jan/Feb 1991)**  
**Scott Wheeler**

ADLER Hymnset for Organ. SCHUMAN (arr. Adler) *When Jesus Wept*. READ Preludes on Old Southern Hymns. • Barbara Harbach, organ; Samuel Adler, director; Rochester Singers. • GASPARO 258 [DDD]; 73:16. Produced by John M. Proffitt. (Distributed by Allegro.)

The three American composers represented on this disc were born between 1910 and 1928. They represent a solid conservative tradition now enjoying a well-deserved resurgence of interest. In this collection, beautifully conceived and executed, all the music is based on American hymns.

The spiritual element in music has seldom been more plainspoken than in the American church hymn. These organ preludes are in their way as plainspoken as the tunes themselves. Paradoxically, they are also meditative, and more convincingly so than most music marketed as meditative or New Age. They may be plain, but they draw us into a slower and deeper world. There is a genuine musical and spiritual heritage behind these hymn tune meditations, just as there is in the Bach and Brahms preludes that are their models. Both the composers and the performers have lived with this music; it wears very well through repeated listenings.

On this recording, each of the nineteen organ preludes is prefaced by the original hymn, sung by a small choir. Though this arrangement breaks the continuity of the suites, it has both educational and musical value. The alternation of choir and organ gives the effect of an idealized worship service, with its own rhythm and continuity. It also gives an unfortunate initial impression that the organ preludes are merely improvisatory noodles on the tunes, just the local organist filling time in the service. Further listening dispels this impression, and makes the compositional care of these works more than clear. William Schuman's *When Jesus Wept* is an arrangement by Adler of the middle movement of Schuman's orchestral suite *New England Triptych*. It is rather severe in this version, but very fine. Two sets of *Preludes on Old Southern Hymns* by Gardner Read (fourteen pieces in all) make up the bulk of the disc. Read tends toward slow theme statements in solo stops with scalar accompaniments (as in the moving *Thou Man of Grief, Remember Me*), alternating with canonic settings in toccata-like figurations (*Once More, My Soul, the Rising Day*), some of which sound a bit hollow in their heroics. The four preludes of Samuel Adler's *Hymnset* center on his splendid adagio on *How Firm a Foundation*, a tune familiar to those who know its vigorous setting in Virgil Thomson's *Symphony on a Hymn Tune*. Neither the Adler nor any of the other works here is as peculiar or original as Thomson's symphony. Adler,

Schumann, and Read don't push any musical limits. In fact, some listeners might find their music predictable and commonplace. So much the worse for them. The beauty of this work is not the beauty of novelty, but of familiar ground explored with skill and devotion.

Both the organ, a Fisk, and the organist Barbara Harbach produce a warm, human sound, neither grandiose nor mechanical. The Rochester Singers, under Adler's direction, give plain and expressive performances, avoiding both the shaggier side of "authentic" shape-note style and overrefined "interpretation." The acoustic ambience gives a touch more resonance to the choral selections, which works well. John Proffitt, the engineer, is also the producer and annotator. He also commissioned one of the Adler preludes as a present for organist Harbach—an indication of the extent to which this is a labor of love for all concerned.

**Fanfare Magazine Issue 14:2 (Nov/Dec 1990)**  
**David Claris**

*EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY SOLO HARPSICHORD MUSIC BY WOMEN*  
*COMPOSERS, VOLUME II.* • Barbara

Harbach, harpsichord. • GASPARO GSCD-281 [DDD]; 67:35. Produced by Roy Christensen. (Distributed by Allegro.)

A LADY Lesson VI in D. CECILIA MARIA BARTHELEMON Sonata in G, op. 3. MARIA HESTER PARK Concerto in E $\flat$ . Sonata in C, op. 7. ELIZABETH TURNER Lessons: I in G Minor; II in G.

Because traditionally it has not been "a woman's place" to compose music or perform publicly (it took a very strong, even rebellious, lady to pursue those avenues), is it any wonder there are no female Bachs, Beethovens, or Brahmses? Even if such talent existed, it would have been systematically suppressed by sociocultural strictures, without a chance of nurturance. But wouldn't it be a hoot if one day musicologists determined that some major masterwork had indeed been misattributed, or published under masculine pseudonym by a woman? Undreamt-of revenge for the feminist!

Even if such *incognito* conditions had applied to the present collection of works by eighteenth-century Englishwomen, I doubt they would have created any stir of suspicion. They certainly don't sound in any way gender-specific, if such a thing is possible. In terms of invention, they are neither inferior, nor markedly superior, in any instance to the mean quality of their period. Barthelemon's zesty sonata sounds appealingly derivative of Scarlatti while the Park concerto is distinctly Haydn-esque. Plainly, these two men are composers that many serious keyboard practitioners of the era, male and female, emulated and imitated. The remainder of the program, some generic compositions called lessons by an anonymous "Lady" and one Elizabeth Turner, though not on the level of their discmates, make unpretentious and not unpleasant *Hausmusik*.

Barbara Harbach, a faculty member at SUNY-Buffalo, plays the entire program with a convincing balance of delicacy, taste, and lusty abandon. Her informative annotations are awkwardly laid out sideways in a folding booklet, but this is otherwise a highly respectable sequel to Volume I.

**Fanfare Magazine Issue 14:2 (Nov/Dec 1990)**  
**William Wians**

*CONTEMPORARY ORGAN MUSIC.* • Barbara Harbach, organ. • GASPARO GSCD 277 [DDD]; 69:57. Produced by Roy Christiansen. (Distributed by Allegro.)

LOCKLAIR Rubrics. Ayre for the Dance. Pageant for Sally. Inventions. ADLER Toccata, Recitation, and Postlude. Two Meditations. Reflection. Wind Songs.

Barbara Harbach seems to be something of a house artist at Gasparo. Professor of keyboard studies at SUNY-Buffalo, she brings an impressive technique and intelligence to her interpretations. Here she plays on a massive Aeolian-Skinner organ at Buffalo's Westminster Presbyterian Church.

Dan Locklair has written everything from opera and ballet to chamber and keyboard works. As it happens, my initial contacts with his music are both with works for organ. Here he is represented by four works. None strike me as highly distinctive, but his all are consistently interesting. *Inventions*, the longest piece, portrays Frustration and Hope, Serenity, Levity, Faith, and Agony and Ecstasy in some genuinely inventive ways.

Samuel Adler also has four pieces. These strike me as often beautiful and powerful. Especially interesting is *Wind Songs*, a four-movement work inspired by four poems about the wind. Dedicated to Harbach, Adler uses the organ, which he argues is itself a wind instrument, to evoke the different images of the poets.

Gasparo has recorded the organ without pizzazz or souped-up zing. The sound is clean, solid, honest. Perhaps not a Grammy winner, but worthwhile on all counts.

**Fanfare Magazine Issue 13:4 (Mar/Apr 1990)**  
**Susan Kagan**

*MUSIC FOR SOLO HARPSICHORD BY EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY WOMEN COMPOSERS.* • Barbara Harbach, harpsichord. • KINGDOM KCLCD 2010 [DDD]; 66:06. Produced by John M. Proffitt. (Distributed by Allegro.)

BÁRTHÉLÉMON Sonata In E, op. 1, no. 3. MARTINEZ Sonatas: in E; in A. AUENBRUGG Sonata in E $\flat$ ; Rondo. GAMBARINI Pieces for the Harpsichord, op. 2. MARIA HESTER PARK Sonata in F.

This is an exceptionally attractive collection of little-known keyboard music, most of it characteristic of the Rococo period in its aim to please the ear. Well-shaped melodies, Alberti-type basses, symmetrical forms, delicate ornaments, and the predominance of major keys contribute to the agreeable *galant* style. There is little of the *Sturm und Drang* here, but there are moments, as in the lovely three-movement sonata by Cecelia Barthélémon (English, horn in 1770), when chromaticism and unexpected harmonic turns probe below the sunny diatonic surface. The two sonatas by Marianna Martinez, best-known of the composers heard here, are polished, well-crafted, and sophisticated examples of the keyboard sonata genre as practiced by Haydn and J. C. Bach. The set of pieces by Elisabetta Gambarini (also English, 1731-1765) is more of a dance suite of Baroque styles, including some charming variations on an English song.

These works have a strong advocate in Barbara Harbach, whose performances are musical in every aspect; her playing has technical finesse, rhythmic flair, and sensitivity. The harpsichord she plays has a rich quality, and has been beautifully recorded.

**Fanfare Magazine Issue 13:2 (Nov/Dec 1989)**  
**David Johnson**

*MUSIC FOR SOLO HARPSICHORD BY EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY WOMEN COMPOSERS.* • Barbara Harbach, harpsichord. • KINGDOM KCLCD 2010 [DDD]; 66:06. Produced by John M. Proffitt. (Distributed by Allegro.)

**Excerpt:**

*Music for Solo Harpsichord by 18th Century Women Composers* takes us into a different world—of sound, of expressiveness, of talent (there are no Fanny Mendelssohns or Lili Boulangers here). The harpsichordist for the recital, Barbara Harbach, has made her own selection among these very obscure pieces. Only one of them is a complete dud—the sonata by Cecilia Barthélemon. The notes by producer John Proffitt make the extraordinary claim that this work "is easily as sophisticated as the keyboard sonatas of Haydn." What feckless idiocy! The sonata is the work of an amateur, gauche in its first movement, simplistic to the point of empty-headedness in its rondo. Marianne Martinez is a considerable improvement. Despite the Spanish name she appears to have been Viennese. Due to sloppy proofreading, she also appears to have been born in 1744 and to have become an honorary member of the Bologna Accademia Filharmonica eleven years later, in 1733. Her two sonatas are minor progeny of Domenico Scarlatti's, although they are in the more modern three-movement format. Scarlatti's binary form and much of his vocabulary are in evidence—an example of cultural lag, since Martinez died in 1812, fifty-five years after Scarlatti. She was also a pupil of Haydn and a duet partner of Mozart, so one might have expected a less backward-glancing approach. But unlike Barthélemon, Martinez was a skilled composer. So were the other obscure women on this disc. One of them was more than that: Elisabetta de Gambarini, who lived only thirty-four years (1731-65) was a soprano and conductor as well as a composer. She sang in several » Handel oratorios, and her *Lessons for Harpsichord* are not much inferior to Handel's own suites for that instrument. Harbach plays only five from the first volume; on the basis of this sampling, I'd like to hear all three volumes.

**Fanfare Magazine Issue 09:5 (May/June 1986)**  
**Walter Simmons**

*BARBARA HARBACH PERFORMS MUSIC OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.* • Barbara Harbach, harpsichord. • GASPARO GS-251, produced by John M. Proffitt, \$9.98 [available from: Gasparo Co., P.O. Box 120069, Nashville, TN 37212; add \$1.25 for shipping].

PERSICHETTI Sonata No. 7 for Harpsichord. ADLER Sonata for Harpsichord. MARTINŮ Sonata for Harpsichord. Deux Pièces. Deux Impromptus. ALBRIGHT Four Fancies. TEMPLETON Bach Goes to Town.

This is quite an entertaining recital of recent harpsichord music—not the sort of thing one encounters frequently. All the selections capitalize to some extent on both the conventional historical associations of the instrument and its unique features of timbre and articulation. Some, like the Albright *Four Fancies*, do so in a broad and obvious way; others, like the Persichetti Sonata No. 7, do so with subtlety and a “straight face.”

Vincent Persichetti has always tended to concentrate on particular media and genres in an obsessive fashion, à la Schumann. The object of his most recent infatuation is the harpsichord, with 10 new works since 1981 (and possibly more during the past several months, for all I know). The Seventh Sonata, written in 1983, is the first of the series to appear on records. Its three brief movements (totaling seven minutes) are typically concise, terse, and genial in spirit, while wholly abstract in construction, featuring graceful, thin, linear textures idiomatic to the instrument. While the first two movements are quite austere in tone, the finale explodes with an infectious rhythmic vitality. With his characteristic lack of sensationalism or ostentation, Persichetti is well on the way toward making *the* major contribution to the harpsichord literature of the 20th century. More recordings are in the works and are awaited eagerly.

Another work of conventional serious intentions is the Sonata for Harpsichord of Samuel Adler, a prolific and versatile musician who heads the composition department at the Eastman School. Both this work and the Persichetti sonata were written for Harbach, who introduced them at the same recital in 1984. Adler's neoclassicism is more rhythmically and texturally aggressive than Persichetti's, with the kinds of forceful, quite dissonant sonorities one does not expect from the harpsichord. These create a jarring, but invigorating, effect. The slow movement, however, provides some rather tender moments. This is an engrossing work that encourages greater familiarity.

A notable feature of this release is its presentation of the complete works for harpsichord of Bohuslav Martinů, whose music has enjoyed quite a resurgence of interest during the past decade. Martinu's 1958 sonata is a bit of a disappointment, however. While many of his felicitous little quirks are in evidence, the piece bounces along its chipper way for six minutes without much real substantial interest. Setting the harpsichord in alien stylistic territory results in some unintentional and amusing incongruities. In the case of Martinu's sonata, there are moments that bear striking resemblance to Philip Glass and even rock music. Also included are Martinu's *Deux Pièces* from 1935 and *Deux Impromptus* from 1959—a few months before his death. These all have some modest charm, but are of minimal interest.

Certainly the strangest music on the disc is William Albright's *Four Fancies*, dating from 1979. Albright is a professor at the University of Michigan, where he is Associate Director of Electronic Music Studio, but his interests include jazz, ragtime, and forays into musical humor. Everything I've heard of Albright's suggests a personality stronger on wit and imagination than purely musical talent. In other words, he seems, like Ives, to be more interesting for what he is attempting than for what he does. These *Four Fancies* add up to a wacky stylistic hodgepodge that calls to mind Monty Python, especially in the outer movements. The first is a mad takeoff on a Baroque French Overture, while the finale is a *Danza Ostinata*, which the liner notes link to near-Eastern music, boogie-woogie, Soler, and Terry Riley. I don't wish to deny the zany appeal of this music, which I think would break up any audience in a live performance, but I don't think it stands much close scrutiny.

*Bach Goes to Town: Prelude and Fugue in Swing* is a movement from Alec Templeton's 1938 *Topsy-Turvy Suite*, originally for piano. It is certainly effective enough on the harpsichord, in its cutely naive, dated sort of way. However, Harbach plays the piece so humorlessly and stiffly that much of its wit is lost.

In general, Barbara Harbach has presented an enjoyably varied, ambitious, and unusual program, which she performs quite well. But, as just suggested, there is a stiffness to her playing that cannot simply be attributed to the instrument. Moreover, passages of technical intricacy tend to lack rhythmic precision—a serious problem on the harpsichord, which cannot delineate rhythmic structure by means of dynamic accents. (When writing for the harpsichord, composers should bear in mind the dangers of complex rhythms that do not define themselves through explicit figurations.) The sonic quality of the recording is extraordinarily fine, with an all-pervasive fullness of sonority that is quite powerful, without the intrusion of mechanical noise. I found it quite breathtaking. Harbach, who is Coordinator of Keyboard Studies at the University of Buffalo, seems to have a

real affinity for contemporary styles as well as an awareness of the recent repertoire for her instrument. I would be happy to see her continue her explorations in an ongoing series of recordings like this.

**Fanfare Magazine Issue 09:5 (May/June 1986)**  
**Edward Strickland**

HANDEL (arr. Wm. Babel) Suite from Rinaldo. SCARLATTI Sonatas: in F minor, K. 239; in G, K. 146. C.P.E. BACH Württemberg Sonata in A minor, Op. 2, No. 1. BACH French Suite No. 5 in G, BWV816. • Barbara Harbach, harpsichord. • GASPARO GS-249, produced by John M. Proffitt, \$9.98 [available from Gasparo Co., P.O. Box 120069, Nashville, TN 37212; add \$1.25 for shipping].

**Excerpt:**

Nicely delineated and virtuosic Handel and CPE; propulsively angular Scarlatti... With its excellent sonics, this is a very enjoyable disc...

**Fanfare Magazine Issue 09:5 (May/June 1986)**  
**John Ditsky**

*AMERICAN HYMN PRELUDES.* • Barbara Harbach, organ; Rochester Singers, conducted by Samuel Adler. • GASPARO GS-258, produced by John M. Proffitt, \$9.98 [available from: Gasparo Co., P.O. Box 1 20069, Nashville, TN 3721 2; add \$1.25 for shipping].

ADLER Hymnset for Organ Solo—Four Chorale Preludes on Old American Hymns. SCHUMAN When Jesus Wept. READ Preludes on Old Southern Hymns (11): Op. 90, Nos. 1, 2, 4, 6, and 8, and 112; Op. 90, Nos. 1-6.

Gasparo Records does good work. There is a pleasurable professionalism about the presentation of this package—the good pressing of the direct-metal-mastered sound, the cover design, the outer sleeve, the thorough notes by the producer (whose commissioning of one of the movements of *Hymnset* as a Christmas present for the organist seems to have been the germ for the overall concept of the release), the intelligent decision to precede these organ preludes with a singing of the hymns (some familiar; some not; and Read's from the 1902 edition of *The Sacred Harp*) upon which they were based (a decision that, while dissatisfying to those who would prefer to have all of both Gardner Read sets, does not only add variety to the package but also enables the hearer to appreciate the inventiveness of the composers). Organist Harbach delivers impressively sinewy performances throughout this single-take transcription, and as a reviewer I regret not yet having encountered her previous recordings for Gasparo. Her performance style ideally matches the salient strengths of the organ itself, a late Charles Fisk creation resident in the Downtown Presbyterian Church of Rochester (as organ fanciers might expect, specifications are included in the annotation). Since the microphones, we are told, were positioned only 15 feet away from the organ's positive division, the slightly recessive sound may be owing more to Gasparo's generous inclusion of a full hour of music than to any other recording factor; the newness of the instrument (1983), however, may also deserve credit for a satisfying absence of tracker-action noise. The singers do their work creditably. And the music? Samuel Adler's four-movement *Hymnset* preserves respect for its original materials in treatments that have the spontaneity of improvisations about them, and even at times seem to be busily quoting and alluding to other men's organ pieces. His arrangement for organ of a single movement from William Schuman's *New England Triptych*, in style consistent with *Hymnset*, is nevertheless faithful to the text of the latter composer, who in fact suggested that Adler and not himself do the adaptation. Gardner Read's Preludes are varied, inventive, and communicative; they also occupy more

than half of the surface space. Recommended, then, for devotees of American music and of organ music generally.

**Fanfare Magazine Issue 07:4 (Mar/Apr 1984)**  
**Haig Mardirosian**

*HARBACH PLAYS BACH.* • Barbara Harbach, organ. • GASPARO GS 237, produced by John M. Proffitt, \$9.98 [available from: Gasparo Company, P.O. Box 120069, Nashville, TN 37212].

BACH Prelude and Fugue in C Minor, BWV 546. Fantasy and Fugue in G Minor, BWV 542. Prelude and Fugue in E Minor, BWV 548 ("Wedge"). Fantasy and Fugue in A Minor, BWV 561. "O Mensch, bewein' dein Sünde gross," BWV 622. "In dir ist Freude," BWV 615.

Dr. Harbach's performance generally profits from her secure technique and upholds a consistent sense of excitement. The playing style reflects the performer's broad training—both European and American elements sum up to a healthy eclecticism. While Harbach may have miscalculated the staying power of the mercurial G-minor Fantasy given the smallish room and modest Schlicker organ at the Lutheran Church in Lyons, New York, she certainly endows the Buxtehudian A-minor Fantasy with rousing joy. The two manual organ discounts multiterracing of the "Wedge" which traits justly segment the work. Furthermore, the Schlicker's *pedal-werk* has a way of sounding poorly defined. The wide-scale 16' speaks just plain late. Nevertheless, good playing.

## **HARBACH RECORDINGS MISC. LPs (1980s)**

### **The Milken Archive of American Jewish Music at One Year**

**ADLER Sephardic Choruses:** Yom Gila;<sup>1</sup> Y a Ribbon Olam;<sup>1</sup> Ein Keloheinu;<sup>1, 2</sup> Adon Olam;<sup>1</sup> Zamm'ri Li.<sup>1</sup> Nuptial Scene.<sup>3</sup> The Binding: Excerpt.<sup>4</sup> El Melekh Yoshev.<sup>5</sup> Ahavat Olam.<sup>6</sup> Sim Shalom.<sup>7</sup> Bar'khu\* Sh'ma Yisra'el.<sup>9</sup> V'ahavta.<sup>10</sup> Mi Khamokha.<sup>11</sup> Hashkivenu." Symphony No. 5, "We are the Echoes."<sup>12</sup> • Patrick Gardner, cond <sup>12</sup>; Mary Ellen Callahan, sop <sup>1</sup>; Helen Kruzewski, sop <sup>2</sup>; Heather Johnson, mez <sup>1</sup>; Matthew Kirchner, ten <sup>1</sup>; Gideon Dabi, bar <sup>2</sup>; Ted Christopher, bar <sup>1</sup>; Pen Yin Fang, pn <sup>1, 2</sup>; Rutgers Kirkpatrick Ch <sup>1, 2</sup>; Samuel Adler, cond <sup>3, 12</sup>; Margaret Bishop Kohler, mez <sup>3</sup>; Eastman Players <sup>3</sup>; Freda Herseth, sop <sup>4</sup>; Joseph Evans, ten <sup>4</sup>; Raphael Frieder, bar <sup>4</sup>; Slovak RSO <sup>4</sup>; Alberto Mizrahi, cantor <sup>5</sup>; Barbara Harbach, org <sup>5</sup>; Roslyn Jhunever Barak, cantor <sup>6, 7, 8, 9, 10</sup>; Rochester Singers <sup>6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11</sup>; Richard Botton, cantor <sup>11</sup>; Phylis Bryn-Julson, sop <sup>12</sup>; Berlin RSO <sup>12</sup>. • NAXOS 8.559415 (70:39 CŪ)

**BERLINSKI *From the World of My Father.*<sup>1</sup> *Shofar Service.*<sup>2</sup> *The Burning Bush.*<sup>3</sup> *Symphonic Visions*<sup>4</sup>** • Gerard Schwarz, cond;<sup>1, 4</sup> Seattle SO;<sup>1</sup> Ted Christopher (bar);<sup>2</sup> James Ghigi (tpt);<sup>2</sup> Stephen Keavy (tpt);<sup>2</sup> Tim Roseman (shofar);<sup>2</sup> Christopher Bowers-Broadbent (org);<sup>2</sup> Avner Itai, cond;<sup>2</sup> Barbara Harbach (org);<sup>3</sup> Barcelona SO/Nat'l O of Catalonia<sup>4</sup> • NAXOS 8.559446 (55:32)

**BRUCKNER Sacred and Secular Choral Music.** • Kathleen Miller, soprano; Melanie Ohm, mezzo-soprano; Christopher Jones, tenor; Matthew Lau, baritone; Barbara Harbach, organ; Roberts Wesleyan College Chorale & Brass Ensemble, conducted by Robert Shewan. • ROBERTS WESLEYAN COLLEGE 00 Produced by John M. Proffitt, \$9.50 (available from: Office of Development, Roberts Wesleyan College, 2301 Westside Drive, Rochester, NY 14624).

**AMERICANA- Choral Masterworks by American Composers.** • Roberts Wesleyan College Chorale, conducted by Robert Shewan; Barbara Harbach, organ. • ROBERTS WESLEYAN 00. Produced by John Proffitt, \$9.50 postpaid [available from: Music Department, Roberts Wesleyan College, Rochester, NY 14624].

**THOMPSON The Last Words of David. The Feast of Praise—Cantata. Alleluia. The Best of Rooms. HANSON Prayer of the Middle Ages. Psalm 8, How Excellent Thy Name. Psalm 121, 1 Will Lift Up Mine Eyes. Psalm 150, Praise Ye the Lord. HARRIS When Johnny Comes Marching Home. Symphony for Voices. Three Songs of**

**Democracy.** • Robert Shewan, conductor; Roberts Wesleyan College Chorale, Roberts Wesleyan Brass Ensemble; Barbara Harbach, organ. • BAY CITIES BCD 1011 [ADD/DDD]; 71:09. Produced by John Proffitt. (Distributed by KOCH International.)

**AMERICANA- Choral Masterworks by American Composers.** • Roberts Wesleyan College Chorale, conducted by Robert Shewan; Barbara Harbach, organ. • ROBERTS WESLEYAN 00. Produced by John Proffitt, \$9.50 postpaid [available from: Music Department, Roberts Wesleyan College, Rochester, NY 14624].

**HANSON A Prayer of the Middle Ages.** Psalm 8. Psalm 121. Psalm 150. HARRIS Three Songs of Democracy. Symphony for Voices. When Johnny Comes Marching Home. SOWERBY A Liturgy of Hope.

**HANSON Concerto da Camera<sup>12</sup>. Yuletide Pieces<sup>1</sup>. Concerto for Organ, Harp, and Strings<sup>345</sup>. Psalm 8, "How Excellent Thy Name"<sup>67</sup>. Psalm 150, "Praise Ye the Lord"<sup>67</sup>. Psalm 121, "I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes"<sup>67</sup>. A Prayer of the Middle Ages<sup>6</sup>. Nymphs and Satyr<sup>3</sup>.** • Brian Preston, piano <sup>1</sup>; Meliora Quartet <sup>2</sup>; David Fetler, conductor; Rochester Chamber Orchestra <sup>3</sup>; David Craighead, organ <sup>4</sup>; Eileen Malone, harp <sup>5</sup>; Roberts Wesleyan College Chorale <sup>6</sup>; Barbara Harbach, organ <sup>7</sup>. • ALBANY TROY-129 [DDD12/ADD]; 69:08. Produced by John Gladney Proffitt.

**THOMPSON The Last Words of David. The Feast of Praise—Cantata. Alleluia. The Best of Rooms. HANSON Prayer of the Middle Ages. Psalm 8, How Excellent Thy Name. Psalm 121, I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes. Psalm 150, Praise Ye the Lord. HARRIS When Johnny Comes Marching Home. Symphony for Voices. Three Songs of Democracy.** • Robert Shewan, conductor; Roberts Wesleyan College Chorale, Roberts Wesleyan Brass Ensemble; Barbara Harbach, organ. • BAY CITIES BCD 1011 [ADD/DDD]; 71:09. Produced by John Proffitt. (Distributed by KOCH International.)

**G. READ Sonata da Chiesa for Piano, op. 61. String Quartet No. 1, op. 100<sup>2</sup>. Sonoric Fantasia No. 1, for Harp, Harpsichord, and Celesta, op. 102<sup>3</sup>. Five Aphorisms for Violin and Piano, op. 150<sup>4</sup>.** • Joseph Holt, piano <sup>1</sup>; Boston Composers String Quartet <sup>2</sup>; Leslie Stratton Horris, harp; Barbara Harbach, harpsichord; Gerald Berthiaume, celesta <sup>3</sup>; Janet Packer, violin; Howard

Karp, piano <sup>4</sup>. • NORTHEASTERN NR 253-CD [DDD?]; 66:58. Produced by L. E. Joiner et al. (Distributed by Koch International.)