

ELLEN HARGIS

ellenhargis.com | ellen@ellenhargis.com | 312.545.9655

Performance Reviews

In Concert with the Newberry Consort

Soprano Ellen Hargis brought artful artlessness to such salon and fireside fare as "Beautiful Dreamer," "Sweet Betsy From Pike" and "The Girl I Left Behind Me."

Chicago Tribune – November 6, 2009

In Recital with Paul O'Dette

"Hargis's resplendent voice, which she wields with consummate authority, ran the expressive gamut from the desperation of Alessandro Scarlatti's Orfeo and Barbara Strozzi's haunting ground-bass lament *L'amante segreto*, to the impassioned and coquettish episodes in Cesti's cantata."

17th-Century Music – Fall 2009

In Concert with The King's Noyse

Hargis' transformation into a chanteuse, coaxing along "Summertime," "Round Midnight" and "Some Other Time" with bell-like tone, and the effect was, well, right on. Hargis not only conveyed the meaning of lyrics and sang with an unaffected, bright timbre, but she also freely maneuvered in her high range. In the ballad "Barbara Allen's Cruelty" or the songs "When May is in his Prime" and "O Death, Rock Me Asleep," she effortlessly glided into the upper register. This lent an attractive natural character to her delivery and transported this music wonderfully to the modern ear.

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette – February 2, 2009

In Concert at the September Prelude Festival, Raleigh and Chapel Hill, NC:

Soprano Ellen Hargis gave a stellar performance with superb diction and phrasing and an evenly supported, warm-toned voice across its range...The clarity and precision of Hargis's French in the recitatives and airs was amazing. Her care for words and meaning came across in every phrase. Above all, she and her colleagues...displayed the prized French qualities of elegance and precision."

Classical Voice of North Carolina – September 11, 2009

In Recital with lutenist Paul O'Dette, Vancouver Early Music Festival:

"It would be hard to imagine the queen in possession of better musicians than the ones we heard... Hargis's soprano rang clearly and eloquently. There were two songs in particular that were shattering: *Flow My Tears* and *In Darkness Let Me Dwell*. Hargis in her singing was moving beyond words. The house was deservedly full."

Vancouver Sun - August 7, 2007

In Recital with Paul O'Dette at New York City's Morgan Library:

"Soprano Ellen Hargis and the lutenist Paul O'Dette, who performed at the Morgan on Tuesday, have unimpeachable Boston credentials. Ms. Hargis, who sings with a clear tone and minimal vibrato, brought a hint of introspective drama to Monteverdi's 'Ohimè ch'io cado' and 'Quel sguardo sdegnosetto.' Between them she gave a palpably forlorn account of 'Si dolce è'l tormento.' Much of Ms. Hargis's expressive charm is in her flexibility, a quality heard to best effect in three songs by Barbara Strozzi. Her thoughtful pacing and the ease with which she moved through the gentle chromaticism of 'Respira, mio core' and the increasingly

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florid writing in 'L'amante segreto' gave these songs a monumental quality, as if they were operatic fragments.."

New York Times - May 18 2007

Bach Cantatas with the American Bach Soloists:

"Bereitet die Wege, bereitet die Bahn! begins with a buoyant soprano aria whose vocal line is interspersed with ritornellos and evocative passages. Hargis brought clean articulation and a sense of jubilation to her lines. The gem of the piece was Hargis' aria 'Er segnet'. Hargis effortlessly spun out endless phrase after endless phrase, punctuating them with wonderful shifts in dynamics. In addition, her pure tone and agile ascending lines were matched by a legato that should be a model for all singers."

San Francisco Classical Voice - March 27, 2007

Bach's St. Matthew Passion at the Kennedy Center

"Sang with equal parts skill and splendor."

Washington Post - March 22, 2005

Boston Early Music Festival 2005:

In *Boris Gudunov*: "Ellen Hargis brought dignity, grace and vocal subtlety to her portrayal of Irina."

New York Times, June 18, 2005

"Of the three sopranos, veteran BEMF diva Ellen Hargis was most effective. She has learned to act within this idiom, and her upper tones can still bloom."

Boston Globe. June 15, 2005

Soloist in BEMF Orchestra concert: "The program also included star turns by Ms. Hargis (a heart-rending performance of 'Lasciate Averno,' from Rossi's 'Orfeo')."

New York Times, June 18, 2005

Recital with Paul O'Dette, St. Petersburg Early Music Festival

"Chicago's Ellen Hargis, another guest of the Early Music, perform Italian and English songs with such an inimitable charm you might believe she grew up among English peasants or Italian fishermen, learning the melodies from her grandmothers. She definitely has a remarkable ability to get inside a song. Some say her voice is clear as crystal and sonorous as the ring of a bell. Hargis often performs with Paul O'Dette (wonderful lutenist) who provides exceptional accompaniment for her the impressive and hauntingly pure soprano."

Moscow News - October 19, 2004

Vancouver Early Music Festival 2003

"Audience members were treated to a generous helping of Hargis' russet-toned voice and convincing portrayal of Dido's fury and despair. A gorgeously subdued cadence lingered at the end, like the taste of a deliciously herbed sauce."

The Georgia Strait - August 21, 2003

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Ottavia in Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, Festival Vancouver

"The over-all vocal standard is remarkably high and just as remarkably consistent. [The] role filled by Ellen Hargis as Nero's wronged queen Ottavia [was] no less stunning."

Vancouver Sun – August 7, 2003

"Ellen Hargis lends the empress Ottavia an amusing, full-throated mix of dignity and vitriol."

Vancouver Sun - August 10, 2003

"Ellen Hargis projected just the right combination of dignity and desperation as the cast-off Ottavia."

Georgia Strait – August 14, 2003

Recital with Paul O'Dette, Chamber Music in Historic Sites, Santa Barbara

"The success of the endeavor was resounding because of the artists' inspired handiwork. Musically, the program was impressive. Hargis cuts through the ancient character of the music with an assured tone and ever-lucid approach to the material."

Santa Barbara News Press - April 8, 2003

Performing with the Newberry Consort, Chicago

"Soprano Ellen Hargis sailed sweetly through the florid parts of Sarah and the Angel."

Chicago Tribune - March 15, 2003

New York recital with Paul O'Dette

"Ms. Hargis' voice is attractive and nicely supported. She did a fine job of shaping and conveying the spirit of these pieces. Mr. O'Dette was in good form as well, both in the energy and elegance of his accompaniments and in his solo turns."

New York Times - January 23, 2003

Soloist with Seattle Baroque Orchestra

"Soprano Ellen Hargis is one of the outstanding artists of our day. In 'Armida abbandonata' she conveyed her character's external grace and internal seething passions with a precision and control that recalled the singular excellence of the late Judith Raskin. Like Raskin, Hargis can sing intricate musical passagework with the best of instrumentalists, such as her Seattle Baroque colleagues on Saturday night."

Pittsburgh Tribune, April 19 2005

"Fortunately, Ellen Hargis was imported for the cantata. She possesses a long, supple line and beauty of tone to make Handel's Italianate work sing freely and has the technical ability to swim easily through the passagework the composer poured into the piece."

Seattle Post-Intelligencer - October 28, 2002

"Hargis sang with a stunning palette of color, deployed with wondrous control and a keen dramatic sense."

Seattle Weekly - October 30, 2002

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Recital with Imbi Tarum, Tallinn, Estonia

"We had a chance to hear a very special concert, very much enjoyed from beginning to end. American soprano Ellen Hargis' performance was extremely beautiful due to its clarity and restraint, her vocal technique and balanced theatricality. Song lyrics which told of the pains of love, received in this concert a very personal interpretation. With delicate melodic lines and perfect intonation, everything was bright and mellifluous."

SIRP - September 6, 2002

Soprano soloist, American Bach Soloists, Berkeley Festival

"Ellen Hargis, the soprano, was cool, elegant, near-immaculate technically."

SF Classical Voice (sfcv.org), June 11, 2002

Music of the Baroque, Chicago Jane Glover, conductor

(Mozart Requiem) "Hargis' soprano sounded pure and angelic."

Chicago Sun Times, Sept. 29 2004

"Hargis was equally assertive, her pure soprano rising easily above the orchestra, but also complementing the ensemble's bright sheen. She was in top form, racing easily up and down Mozart's fiendishly difficult ornaments as though they were a dazzling, crystalline staircase."

Chicago Sun-Times – February 23, 2002

Galatea in Handel's *Acis & Galatea*, Renaissance and Baroque Society of Pittsburgh

"In what will probably turn out to be one of the more important musical performances of the season, the Renaissance and Baroque Society presented a stunning performance, an overwhelmingly gratifying evening. The role of Galatea was exquisitely sung by Ellen Hargis, and hers was by far the most beautiful voice on the stage. It was full and strong, and her mini-cadenza near the end of the aria was breathtaking."

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette - October 8, 2001

"This concert needed to be a hit. And it was. Three of the most successful local organizations joined together with soloists, including Ellen Hargis, to produce Handel's pastoral oratorio, 'Acis and Galatea.' It was an overwhelmingly gratifying evening. We can only hope for much more of this type of coming together."

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette – December 2001

Recital, Vancouver Early Music Festival

"Hargis, always a delight, sang with a fresh enjoyment of the music as though no centuries had intervened between creation and recreation, her tone radiant, her projection unforced and her embellishments agile and pure. Ottavia's bitter, wounded expressions were sung with a plangency that cut to the heart of the music."

Vancouver Sun – July 31, 2001

"Acclaimed American soprano Ellen Hargis sang with enough conviction to put psychotherapists out of business. The unaffected purity of her voice was supported by La Cetra. Hargis' ornamentations unfurled like a shiny new leaf, unerring in pitch. She instinctively delivered trills, turns and tremolos with a seductive casualness."

Georgia Straight – August 2-9, 2001

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Aeglé in Lully's *Thésée*, Boston Early Music and Tanglewood Festivals

"Ellen Hargis sings and moves gracefully as the ingenue Aeglé."

Boston Globe - June 14, 2001

Recital, San Diego State University

"This is a vocal instrument of exceptional loveliness. Furthermore Hargis' vocal agility is first rate; her powers of expression are intense and varied; she understands the texts she sings and brings out their poetic and dramatic meanings with great effectiveness. There are in fact, few singers of early music better at this kind of thing than Ellen Hargis."

San Diego Reader - June 7, 2001

Seattle Baroque Orchestra

"No less superb a performance, by Hargis with the orchestra, was that of Handel's 'Salve Regina.' Over and over, Hargis, a consummate musician and wonderful singer, entered on a quite unexpected note, leading the music in a different direction with thrilling harmonies and exciting chromaticisms. The glorious whole was close to perfect."

Seattle Post Intelligencer - May 14, 2001

Dafne / Proserpina in Peri's *Euridice*, Long Beach Opera

"The best singers included Ellen Hargis (who personified Tragedy in the prologue as well as Dafne and the underworld goddess Proserpina)."

Los Angeles Times - October 9, 2000

"Only Ellen Hargis was truly superb, in an incandescently soft and gentle way."

concertonet.com - October 2000

Festival Vancouver performances of Monteverdi's *Orfeo* and *Vespers 1610*

"How movingly and ethereally Hargis sang."

Vancouver Sun - August 8, 2000

Recital with Paul O'Dette at Case Western Reserve University

"Everything sounded like a little gem as performed by Hargis and O'Dette, who worked together with a kind of nuanced, natural teamwork that highlighted the best qualities of the music. The soprano savored the delicious texts, wrapping her radiant voice around the words, pointing out expressive details, soaring easily in florid passages and ornamenting with tasteful generosity."

Cleveland Plain Dealer - July 1, 2000

Music of Kapsberger, Berkeley Festival

"Hargis is living proof that stylistic insight and major artistry are not mutually exclusive. In 'Mentre vaga Angioletta' (to cite but one of several numbers), the soprano phrased with exquisite attention to the emotional import of the verse, rounding cadences with velvety elegance."

San Francisco Examiner - June 7, 2000

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Soloist with The New York Collegium, Gustav Leonhardt, conductor

"Ellen Hargis was an excellent soprano soloist who should have been kept busier. On the words 'Sie Weinet des Nachts' she alternated full voice and echoing half-voice with remarkable fluidity and control, and sang everywhere with robust yet lovely tone."

New York Times - April 17, 2000

Recital with Paul O'Dette, Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University

"Hargis revels in the human side of early music. Wonderful. More people need to know of her. Hargis can pretty much do with her voice what Simon Standage does with his violin. And that's an awful lot."

Boston Globe - November 13, 1999

Recital with Paul O'Dette, Case Western Reserve, Cleveland

"Soprano Ellen Hargis' lustrous voice has the clarity and ring of fine crystal. [She] has affinity for language and a remarkable ability to get inside a song. For the French *airs de cour*, Hargis turned into a spellbinding baroque chanteuse. In songs by Jacopo Peri, Hargis unleashed her vocal virtuosity to evoke larger-than-life characters. [She] opened her voice like a 17th-century Roman diva. Her performance was brilliant."

The Plain Dealer - October 25, 1999

Vancouver Early Music Festival

"In her superb performances, Hargis sang every note and uttered every word of the texts with silvery precision. Hargis, singing like an angel, was an event that inspired the audience to respond with the roaring kind of approval usually heard and observed only at rock shows."

The Georgia Straight - July 22-29, 1999

Handel's *Messiah*, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra

"Soprano Ellen Hargis was a treasure, going straight to the heart of the music. When Handel asked for a virtuoso display, she provided it; when he wanted a simple declamation, she did not gild the lily."

Pioneer Press - December 18, 1998

With The King's Noyse and Piffaro, Philadelphia

"On hand was soprano Ellen Hargis, who has carved out a repertoire niche in Renaissance music that she not only does better than anybody else, but better than you could imagine its being done. The effect was entrancing."

Philadelphia Inquirer - March 4