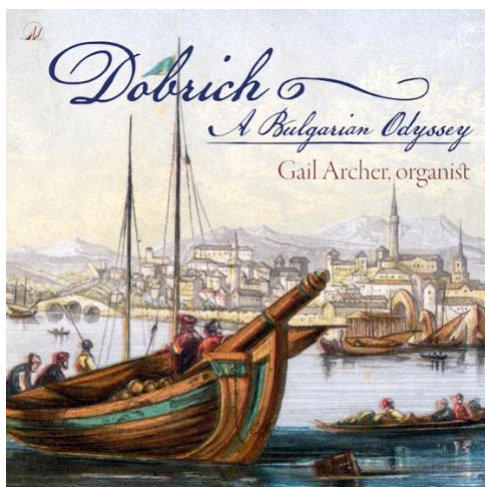


Trailblazing Organist GAIL ARCHER Augments Her Eastern European Discography with *Dobrich: A Bulgarian Odyssey* (Meyer Media)

"Gail Archer should be commended for her commitment to recording music from beyond the well-worn path...an experienced and prolific recording artist" – American Organist Magazine



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NEW YORK, NY (For Release 04.07.25) — Hailed as one of this era's most adventurous interpreters of the classical organ repertoire, leading female organist **Gail Archer** celebrates the release of her 11th album: *Dobrich: A Bulgarian Odyssey* (Meyer Media tbr 04.11.25). Renowned for performing and recording undeservedly obscure and unorthodox organ music, Archer continues her sonic journey of Eastern European composers with rarely performed works by seven Bulgarian composers of the 20th century. During her worldwide tour in summer 2024, Archer recorded *Dobrich* in the Concert Hall in Dobrich, Bulgaria, on a 1979 Schuke organ of 36 stops and two manuals.

Archer's recordings span the 17th-21st centuries, a festive discography that highlights her "superb musicianship, masterly technique and programming savvy (*Gramophone*)."
Dobrich is the fourth installment of Archer's collection of contemporary organ music from Eastern Europe: *Cantius* of Poland (2022), *Chernivsti* of Ukraine (2020), and *A Russian Journey: Music of the Russian Five* of Russia (2017).

"Organists and audiences in Western Europe and the United States are typically unfamiliar with the organ literature of Eastern Europe. There are clearly cultural, economic, and political obstacles to overcome in Bulgaria in order to firmly establish a well-supported organ culture in the country. I hope this recording gives listeners a sense of the remarkable creative spirit among contemporary composers in Bulgaria and is a step forward in the growth of interest in Bulgarian organ music."

- GAIL ARCHER

This riveting collection expertly interpreted by Archer comprises a rich variety of nine works written from 1972 to present day. The album opens with *Erendira* (1990) by the most important living composer of organ music in Bulgaria, **Sabin Levi** (b. 1970), who currently teaches at the National Academy of Music. Two other contemporary composers are rendering large contributions to the Bulgarian repertoire and can be heard on *Dobrich*: **Velislav Zaimov** (b. 1951) and his works based upon Lutheran chorale melodies: *Es kommet ein Schiff, geladen*, and *O'Heiland, reis die Himmel auf*; and the “matriarch” of the Bulgarian organ school, **Neva Krysteva** (b. 1946), and her improvisational piece *Victimae paschali laudes* based on the Gregorian chant which Archer says is the most technically demanding work on the album. Additional pieces include: *Two Frescoes*, the only two organ works written by **Evgeny Cheshmedjiev** (1930-2009); *Evharistia* and *Variations on the song “Polegnala e Tudora”* by female composer **Radosveta Hurkova** (b. 1965); the only work for organ by **Bozhivar Abrashev** (1936-2006) *Prelude for Organ*; and **Kiril Lambov's** (1955-2019) sole organ piece, *Prelude and Toccata*, notable for its demanding rhythm and constantly changing metric scheme.

About Gail Archer

Gail Archer is an international concert organist, recording artist, choral conductor and lecturer who draws attention to composer anniversaries or musical themes with her annual recital series in New York City. These include a Bulgarian Celebration, a Slavic Celebration, Max Reger, The Muse's Voice, An American Idyll, Liszt, Bach, Mendelssohn and Messiaen. Archer was the first American woman to play the complete works of Olivier Messiaen for the centennial of the composer's birth in 2008: *Time Out New York* recognized the Messiaen cycle as “Best of 2008” in classical music and opera. Her previous recordings include *Cantius*, *Chernivtsi*, *A Russian Journey*, *The Muse's Voice*, *Franz Liszt: A Hungarian Rhapsody*, *Bach: The Transcendent Genius*, *an American Idyll*, *A Mystic in the Making* (Meyer Media), and *The Orpheus of Amsterdam: Sweelinck and his Pupils* (CALA Records). Ms. Archer's 2024 European tour took her to Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Norway, Sweden, Poland, Germany, France, Italy and the island of Menorca. Highlights include the Frauenkirche, Dresden, Germany, the Cathedral of Saint Mary, Alghero, Sardegna, the Collegiale de Notre Dame, Mantes-la-Jolie, France, the Bragernes Kirke, Drammen, Norway and the Church of St Francis, Castelbuono, Sicily.

She is the founder of [Musforum](#), an international network for women organists to promote and affirm their work. Ms. Archer is college organist at Vassar College, director of the music program at Barnard College, Columbia University, where she conducts the Barnard-Columbia Chorus and Chamber Singers and a faculty member of the Harriman Institute, Columbia University. She is artistic director of the artist and young artist organ recital series at historic Central Synagogue, New York City.



Gail Archer (credit: Stephanie Berger).

Track Listings:

1. *Erendira* (1990) by Sabin Levi
2. *Es kommt ein Schiff, geladen* (1996) by Velislav Zaimov
- 3-4. *Two Frescoes* (1999) by Evgeny Cheshmedjiev
5. *Victimae Paschali Laudes* (2009) by Neva Krysteva
6. *Evharistia* by Radosveta Hurkova
7. *Prelude for Organ* (2003) by Bozhidar Abrashev
8. *Variations on the song "Polegnala e Tudora"* by Radosveta Hurkova
- 9-10. *Prelude and Toccata* (1985) by Kiril Lambov
11. *O Heiland, reiss die Himmel auf* (2004) by Velislav Zaimov

TRT: 54:37

This recording was made possible in part by the Harriman Institute, Columbia University and Vassar College.

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Gail Archer • Dobrich, A Bulgarian Odyssey

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