

The following comments on the CD “Seeds of Song Through Time” by Cecile and Sarah Barchas were made by Dee Strickland Johnson (Buckshot Dot), noted historian, songwriter, author, and cowboy poet.

“Seeds of Song Through Time”

What an exceptional collection of songs! What an extraordinary concept! What a phenomenal collaboration!

Seeds of Song Through Time is the combination of the artistry of two remarkable ranch women—Sarah Barchas and her mother Cecile. This family reaches back into the ranching history of southern Arizona; but lest I be sidetracked by the heritage, let me proceed with the album:

Before listening to the songs, one should read the cover notes. Most of the songs on the album (eight of thirteen) were Sarah’s combining of her mother’s tunes with her own poignant lyrics. Listening attentively to the delightful tunes which her 95 year old mother was humming, Sarah noted them carefully down and began setting words to the music. Some are hauntingly touching (*Call This Memory, Night Song, Listen to the Dream, etc*), others vibrant with lilting music and frolicsome words (*Music Box and Merry Go Round*); all paint soft water color pictures of past times lived by mother and grandmother woven together with the concerns and hopes of Sarah herself. In listening to the last two numbers mentioned, I find myself moving in the rhythm of a treasured music box or rising and falling with the movement of the painted horses.

One thing important for the listener to realize is that Sarah’s “oohing” is a simulation of the tunes Sarah heard her mother humming.

At age 93 Cecile had commented, “If people will have kindness and love in their hearts, it’s like planting seeds that can envelop the world and make it a better place.” This lady’s positive attitude certainly planted a seed in the fertile soil of her daughter’s mind. And no mean philosopher is Sarah Barchas! Again and again her expressive poetry shows reverence for the past, as well as concern and optimism for the future:

“A toast to life and all that it can be

The zest, the spark, the chances to be found.” (from Music Box)

“Listen to the dream And what it might impart,

That hope can come again To stir a waking heart.” (from Listen to the Dream)

“I was young and saw revolutions sweep through time,

From the advent of the gramophone to computers in a world on line.” (from Seeds of Song)

“Dance the song of sky Ride the wind and air

With his hand in mine When our love was there.” (from Call This Memory)

To complete the album, Sarah included several songs crafted completely by herself. In these, as well, HOPE predominates:

“We must find a window. . .of the mind to let in light and life.” (from Window)

“Worrying does not empty tomorrow of its troubles.

It only empties today of its strength.” (from Worrying)

There is a lovely lullaby (where Sarah’s “oohs” are most appropriate), and a song about environmental concerns. From the rich deep tones of cello and the soft ethereal quiver of harp strings, to haunting harmonizing vocal echoes, the accompaniment rises to the level of Cecile’s melodies and Sarah’s poetry.

This album is a stunner!

By Dee Strickland Johnson