

When we began the Token Creek Festival we were interested in having a chance to make our own decisions as to what would be played, having participated, both of us, as “sidemen” (the jazz term), at many other festivals. We were also interested in breaking away from the summer music idea, warm weather music. Very early in our existence, I believe we established that independence by offering the complete Schoenberg piano music, as played by the composer’s former assistant, Leonard Stein.

Whenever I remember that significant occasion I think of the photo of Schoenberg as the newly arrived European emigree, standing outside his house in Los Angeles Bel Air (near the eventual residences of Marilyn Monroe and OJ Simpson), clad—in August—in a wool coat and hat.

A number of patrons for our concert featuring Marnie Nixon’s collaborations with us (well known for her voice overs in *The Sound of Music* and *West Side Story*) were greeted by Mr. Schoenberg’s *Phantasy*, and Webern songs performed, as they were on their first-ever recording, by Ms. Nixon and Mr. Stein.

Though tradition quickly becomes the enemy of invention, it is worth mentioning a few features of our 2015 programming—if not traditions, perhaps at least peculiarities

Until the loving accounts of various Haydn trios in Charles Rosen’s book *The Classical Style* (1971), the Haydn trios were little known and appreciated even among musicians. We have made them core repertoire at Token Creek, believing that they represent an essential, free-wheeling side of the most neglected great composer.

We have made it a practice to explore locally significant angles for our concerts, one year featuring important pieces premiered in Madison, another season building a concert around the Wisconsin heritage of Georgia O’Keefe, centering another around the nearby vital presence of the International Crane Foundation, and this year building around the work of Lorine Niedecker, poet of Fort Atkinson and increasingly of the whole poetry world, subject of two recent biographies, criticism, and many new publications of her poems. We look forward to this collaboration with the Friends of Lorine Niedecker.

We also look forward to the presence this year of one of the most significant voice and piano duos, Lucy Fitz Gibbon and Ryan MacEvoy McCullough.

We are happy to have included so many distinguished guests in our festivals, and especially to have re-invited so many of them, establishing and prolonging fruitful relationships among listeners and colleagues. Singling out any of them unnecessarily demeans others, but all have contributed to the brief community that is each summer’s festival. This year a return visit by the Lydian Quartet, with music they have commissioned, and with another satisfying regional connection in the return of Wisconsin native Daniel Steptner, illustrates the kind of linkage that has made this long journey so engrossing.

The final concert this summer involves both neatness and extravagance, presenting as it does the only Bach Brandenburg Concerto we have not yet included in our programs, a piece involving a lot of people. We will hope to keep some of them around to play other pieces including our first (!) performances of any music by Handel or Corelli.

By virtue of an unusual zeal of scholarship we will be able to include the lost second movement of Handel’s Concerto op. 3/6. Handel scholars around the world will wait with envy and anxiety.

— John & Rose Mary Harbison, Artistic Directors