

TOKEN CREEK CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL 2016

WATER MUSIC

words & music celebrating the natural world

August 27 – September 4, 2016

WHY SCHUBERT?

For Franz Schubert, the outdoors, the countryside were nearer than they are for most of us. A tramp in the open fields, an unexpected soaking by a rainstorm, the menace of thunder, all were close at hand, even to the reserved, studious former teacher. For Schubert's generation the loudest, most surprising sound might be a carriage and horses racing by, the greatest mysteries were still in the configurations of the stars at night. We see Schubert, in his work, examining the universe with his unaided senses, perhaps not even using a telescope.

The Token Creek Festival 2016 has adopted Schubert this summer as its featured composer because of his poetic, melancholic, ultimately organic and inevitable relationship to the natural world, expressed in composition after composition, wedded to his intense involvement with the poetry of his era, itself so infatuated with birds, fields, clouds, and streams.

It was over a century ago that the State of Wisconsin annexed by eminent domain about four acres of land, through which flowed a stream now identified as Harbison Creek. They widened the stream into a carp pond, just before it joins Token Creek, with the purpose of raising large amounts of fish for the New York State Gefuellte fish market. For a few years it proved to be a successful business, but dwindled into a derelict piece of government land inhabited often by drag racers, drug smokers and dealers, and target practicers. Efforts to interest the state in restoring the property failed, until we decided to do the project ourselves, for the sake of our own aesthetic pleasure of course, but especially for the eventual regional ecological upgrade a newly free-flowing trout stream will provide the whole area.

This is where Schubert comes in, for of course he and his co-professionals in the field of concert music are providing the funds. We are doing this, close to our financial bone, with the earnings

accumulated over years composing, playing, and teaching in Schubert's stream. It has not been a lucrative profession compared to law, medicine, or business, but it has its own compensations, not least the company of all the dreamers and eccentrics who populate its ranks, among them Schubert the outdoor stroller, who once had the foresight to feature within a delightful oddly scored quintet some variations on a song of his called "The Trout." He also made a heartrending, heart-testing song cycle in which a river is one of the central characters (It is called *Die Schöne Müllerin - The Maid of the Mill*). His last piece is a wonderful song for tenor, horn and piano entitled *Auf dem Strom (At the Brook)*. And so forth, to a point that in an entire festival we could not exhaust his investigation of the influence of what we experience outdoors upon our interior lives.

And of course many other composers have also walked there and we will include them as far as we have space.

— *John & Rose Mary Harbison*
Artistic Co-Directors
Token Creek Chamber Music Festival