

In looking back over the season just-ended, I'm delighted to report that the ambitious 2025-26 concert series was well received by music lovers on the Sunshine Coast.

We opened with the enchanting **Consone String Quartet** from the UK, a "period instrument" ensemble that explored a very different sound world than most modern quartets. We also presented the wonderful Vancouver-based **Pacific Baroque Orchestra led by Alexander Weimann**. They offered a fascinating take on J.S. Bach's "Goldberg Variations", originally written for keyboard but performed in an effective arrangement by Alex.

The innovative **Ladom Ensemble**, a quartet from Toronto, created a program custom-designed for the Raven's Cry with short films projected on the theatre's screen to accompany the music.

We welcomed the **Garibaldi Trio** for their third visit to the CRS. The group, created at the instigation of the late Artistic Director Frances Heinsheimer Wainwright, celebrated the official launch of their first CD, a recording that features two works commissioned by the CRS including the exquisite premiere of Dorothy Chang's "Persistence."

Of course the biggest project of the year was the CRS **Pianofest!** - three matinee concerts over three days featuring three of Canada's most celebrated pianists in recital.

In addition to brilliant performances by **Kevin Chen, Charles-Richard Hamelin and Janina Fialkowska**, the weekend was also a festive fund-raiser for the refurbishment of our aging Steinway piano. We drew near-capacity audiences (including music-lovers from the lower mainland, Alberta and Ontario!) and raised nearly \$17,000 with our "buy-a-key" campaign to help cover the costs of sending the piano off to North America's premiere piano rebuilder for a nip/tuck.

Outside the regular concert year, we also sponsored a three-concert tour of the **Mycelia Duo** to various Sunshine Coast venues this spring. The duo - Simon Gidora and Isabella Peron - are multi-instrumentalists, singers and composers with growing local, national and international profiles. What a treat to show them off where they live.

Based on the success of their mini-series, I'm inspired to look ahead to the possibility of creating a "satellite" series of concerts featuring artists from this part of the world. We're rich in talent, but rarely have an opportunity to hear from great musicians living in our midst.

The expanded scope of our 2025-2026 season (five- concert subscription series plus PianoFest and the Mycelia tour) was a huge undertaking for the Coast Recital Society. It was also an opportunity to revitalize the organization and build on a legacy of bringing the world's best to a small but vibrant community.

In addition to the concerts, several of our guest artists also offered outreach performances at local schools and seniors' care facilities - a way of engaging the entire community in classical music. We also supported local young musicians with our scholarship program.

With only two part-time staff, the CRS couldn't possibly carry off this level of programming - especially the risky and challenging Pianofest - without the incredible dedication of time and effort from our volunteer board of directors. They are involved in and responsible for all aspects of the society's endeavours - fundraising, hospitality, piano refurbishment, grant applications, HR, succession planning, outreach co-ordination, flower delivery, policy setting, our scholarship program, proof-reading, ticket-taking, IT support - even stage lighting and keeping the dressing room floors swept - not to mention their collective core responsibilities of governance and financial oversight. As everyone of us who benefit from the opportunity to share extraordinary musical experiences, we owe them a huge amount of gratitude.

I also extend enormous thanks to our General Manager Koree Rogers who keeps on top of a million details every day with grace, good humour and endless reserves of wisdom. Nothing we do happens without her.

Gratitude, also, for the many local donors and concert sponsors who make it possible to bring artists of world renown to Sechart each season. We've seen a substantial decline in government financial assistance in the recent past due to changing priorities in the kinds of cultural programming they regard as worthy of support, so the generosity of local individuals and businesses becomes more essential.

It's an honour and a privilege to share music with the wonderful Sunshine Coast community. I look forward to seeing you again next season at the Raven's Cry Theatre.

Respectfully submitted,
Denise Ball