



Photo: Jan DeGrass/Coast Reporter

Allan Crane
1931- 2014

Allan Crane was the Founder of the Coast Recital Society - CRS President from 1994 to 2000 and CRS Artistic Director until his retirement in 2004.

Allan had a life-long passion for music. His devotion to the performing arts found expression during various phases of his education in England. Allan sang in school choirs, played recorder and string instruments. In college, he majored in music and developed a particular interest in solo and choral singing. He subsequently sang in several choral groups both in England and in Canada. After arriving on the Sunshine Coast in 1967, Allan involved himself in a range of cultural activities, among them the Driftwood Players,

Madrigal Singers, Coastal Soundwaves, and Centennial Singers. In 1984, as volunteer coordinator of musical events for the Sunshine Coast Arts Council, he initiated a regular series of fall and winter concerts called Countryside Concerts. The first concert in that series featured Canadian cellist Ofra Harnoy. Ten years later, in 1994, Allan founded a new subscription series: The Coast Recital Society. The fine roster of artists featured that first season augured well for the future of the Society: pianists Michael Injae Kim and Robert Silverman; violinists Monica Huggett and Marc Destrube; guitarist Richard Savino; the Phoenix Chamber Choir and cellist John Friesen. The CRS brochure lists all the artists that have performed since 1984 – and a remarkable list it is.

Over the years, with numerous twists and turns along the way, yet always guided by Allan's dream as well as his grit and determination, the CRS was able to purchase a superb 9 foot Steinway grand piano. The fact that such an excellent instrument exists in our community has allowed the Society to engage some of the finest pianists of our time, among them Anton Kuerti, Marc-Andre Hamelin, Angela Cheng, Malcolm Martineau, Janina Fialkowska, André Laplante, Yevgeny Sudbin, Boris Giltburg, Javier Perianes, and Stephen Osborne.

Allan's involvement in outreach activities included the CRS scholarship program for local music students. Several years ago, in recognition of Allan's unique contribution to the CRS, the board of directors created the Allan Crane Award, a scholarship for outstanding Sunshine Coast music students pursuing post-secondary music studies. Recipients have been trumpeter Neal Andrews, violist Erin Macdonald, pianist Mark Andrews, violinist Danny Hart, and soprano Rose-Ellen Nichols.

In those early years, Allan led the CRS from his living room at home in Roberts Creek. The word “led” is a pale description of what was involved in an enterprise of this nature. We might more accurately say that Allan led, encouraged, negotiated, cajoled, urged, and guided the CRS. It wasn't long, however, before Allan realized that for the Society to grow, it would need an office – a goal that became a reality when the CRS office opened an office in Sechelt in 2003.

Once the CRS archives and files were moved to the new office, Allan had even more space in his living room for his collection of vintage recordings. His archives focused on the early decades of the 20th century, with an emphasis on opera and singers. Allan regularly attended the Metropolitan Opera HD broadcasts at Sechelt's Raven's Cry Theatre and could frequently be seen on the ferry on his way to Vancouver to attend voice recitals and opera performances.

Allan's contribution to the cultural life of the Sunshine Coast was exceptional. A great supporter of high standards, it was his vision that laid the groundwork for the Coast Recital Society.

As 2014 marks twenty years since the founding of the CRS, it's most appropriate that we dedicate the first concert of the 2014-2015 CRS concert season to Allan's memory.