

The Federal Hill Parlor Series is singing through its second season.

We hear much these days about the need for enterprising young innovators, ready to start from scratch and create successful new ventures, especially regarding the supposed decline of classical music. While large, traditional institutions seem to be shuttering left and right, there are many musicians and supporters moving forward and finding ways to enjoy classical by thinking outside the box.

Could it be that we have those elements right here in Baltimore City? Even in Federal Hill? Well, that is exactly what the Federal Hill Parlor Series is aiming to do by promoting Baltimore musicians and composers in innovative collaborations and interesting venues. By creating fresh perspectives on what a live musical experience can be, we are reinventing the way our guests relate to live performance.

The concept of the Parlor Series is not, in fact, all that new. An Italian invention of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, salons (or parlor gatherings) were a place for literary circles to gather and discuss the scintillating ideas of the day often overseen by an educated patroness. In fact, the first renowned salon was located in France at the Hôtel de Rambouillet not far from the Palais du Louvre in Paris. Its hostess, Roman-born Catherine de Vivonne, marquise de Rambouillet (1588–1665) ran it from 1607 until her death. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century certain Parisian salons were centers of contemporary classical music. These parlor concerts were responsible for commissioning some of the greatest songs and chamber music works of Fauré, Debussy, Ravel and Poulenc.

The Federal Hill Parlor Series is committed to bringing this type of community forum of music, art, and ideas to our beloved neighborhood. We follow a two-sided approach: open houses and private performances. Our events are designed to be a musical party replete with hors d'oeuvres, champagne, and social interplay. This approach offers guests an inexpensive alternative, tickets start at just \$20, to a traditional classical concert and eschews the formality and stuffiness of the concert hall. One aspect that guests love is the ability to walk down the street to attend one of our open houses at Jordan Faye Contemporary Gallery (1401 Light St.) Perhaps even more true to its Parisian Salon roots are the private home concerts. Each private performance is hosted by a resident of the community interested in taking their event to the next level. Hosts choose the date and time of the recital, and if they wish to become further involved in the artistic process, may also participate in choosing the musical program.

It may seem that every time you turn around someone is promising you exciting, innovative programming. However, the Federal Hill Parlor Series is intent on programming for you... our guests. Events usually last two to three hours with live performances sprinkled throughout. The programming features art song with various instruments such as guitar, harp, violin, and cello so far. We have also expanded into more intriguing collaborations such as classical voice and turntables and are working on events that feature beatboxing and slam poetry. During the Christmas season we regaled guests with a Dickens Dinner which included a dramatic reading of Dicken's *A Christmas Carol*, festive songs and carols, and a four course formal dinner.

Although a parlor series is not an entirely new concept, the Federal Hill Parlor Series is putting it together in a fresh and creative way and Federal Hill residents are responding positively. We are not giving you just another event to fill up the calendar. We are striving to provide a vibrant place to enjoy

music and art with *your* friends in *your* neighborhood. We can't wait to meet more friends and neighbors this year so please take an evening to come visit us. You can find out more information about upcoming events at our online box office: <http://FederalHillParlorSeries.eventbee.com/boxoffice>

Sometimes we find ourselves coming into contact with small wonders: a glass of champagne, the simplicity of a single voice and violin, a glance at a stunning piece of art, quality time spent with a friend. Perhaps it is the smallest of things that should be cherished most enormously.