

FEEDBACK – 2017 FESTIVAL FOR CREATIVE PIANISTS

FROM A TEACHER WHO ENTERED 12 STUDENTS IN THE FESTIVAL:

Sent: Thursday, June 29, 2017 3:39:41 PM

Dear Arthur,

Your festival was an inspiration and joy to all who participated, award or no award! Every single student agreed that it was the most fun festival ever! All of you treat each student as a valued individual and member of the community with only helpful remarks.

Since Festival, Rory Devin has been practicing so much harder (he always practiced regularly though), and he has been analyzing all of his music and getting into some Real Book music.

You are all such caring individuals that really are out to promote good, not how good you are! (Although that is obvious!) It is the care and nurturing of every child that all of you come into contact with that makes this festival what it is.

Wynne Anne Rossi was such a positive addition to your judges' line-up!

I am taking two classes this semester and trying to finish my Well-Tempered Blues Book as my senior project. [My Creative Teacher Incentive Award] has given me the motivation I need to do a tremendous amount of work by July 29th (the end of the semester) to get this blues book finished. I thank all of you, and you especially for your very kind support!

I very much look forward to many more festivals!

Janet Ali, Red Rocks Piano Studio

<https://sites.google.com/site/redrockspianostudio>

FROM A GRANDPARENT and FORMER STATE SENATOR:

Sent: Tuesday, July 18, 2017 7:46:07 PM

Prof. Houle, thanks for sending the background on your festival. We'd say again, as grandparents who help sponsor Ian's piano lessons, how impressed we were with this talent-nurturing and -celebrating annual event you have built over so many years...

Best wishes in your so-important calling of keeping music alive at a time when America needs it more than ever.

Yours,

JOHN ANDREWS

Fellow, Centennial Institute

Chairman, Americans For America

Former President, Colorado Senate

Author, *Responsibility Reborn*

www.backboneamerica.net

FROM A PARENT:

Sent: Monday, July 3, 2017 8:47:15 PM
Subject: FYI

Hi Arthur and Evelyn,

...I...wanted to let you know that some people we met through some other friends are very interested in coming out for the Festival next year! We told them about it and they looked it up for their son and were very impressed by it.

:-) Jenny [Freeman]

FROM A PARENT WHOSE THREE CHILDREN PLAYED IN THE FESTIVAL:

Sent: Friday, June 30, 2017 4:14:58 PM

Hi Arthur,

My children had a great experience at the Festival. They liked your friendliness and the interaction with the judges. Thank you for organizing and executing it to give children great musical opportunities.

Kristin Bennion

FROM STUDENT WHO WON FREE FINALE MUSIC NOTATION SOFTWARE (\$600 VALUE):

Sent: Sunday, June 25, 2017 5:42:32 PM

Hello Mr. Houle.

I had so much fun doing the festival and do plan to do it next year. I loved all the judges and loved talking to Mr. Olson. I'm excited to use the Finale once I figure it out. I'm really glad you loved my composition; it's the longest one I've written so far. Thank you for sending me the comments. I look forward to reading them. Also thanks so much for everything and the festival.

Bye for now,
Ashley Morris, age 14

FROM A STUDENT:

Sent: Tuesday, June 27, 2017 11:11:43 AM

Dear Dr. Houle,

Sorry for my late response - my mom is out of town and this is her email. I wanted to thank you for the opportunity to perform in such a unique setting and to receive direct feedback from the composers of the pieces I had worked so hard to master. I appreciate you sending over the feedback from all of the judges.

My favorite tune was also Sally Saddle - I really enjoyed improvising on that one! I learned so much and really enjoyed hearing everyone play, both at the adjudications and recitals.

Thank you again, and I will definitely be back next year!

Heather Hunt, age 13

FROM TEACHER WHO HAD 8 STUDENTS IN THE FESTIVAL:

Sent: Wednesday, June 28, 2017 7:30:27 AM

Thank you, Arthur! We all had a great time and learned a ton. I look forward to it next year. Enjoy some down time...you have earned it! ;)

Kellie Johannik

FROM A PARENT:

Sent: Tuesday, June 27, 2017 4:06:42 PM

Thank you Arthur, what an amazing and supportive fun event for our children. Appreciate all that you and the other volunteers do for the kids.

John Brammeier

FROM A STUDENT AND HER MOM:

Sent: Tuesday, June 27, 2017 4:01:45 PM

Dear Mr. Houle,

Thank you so much for the lovely email! I'm glad you liked the performance; I really enjoyed playing the pieces! The comments were very constructive and helped me look at the music I played in a completely different way. I'm glad I got the chance to talk to and work with such talented and friendly composers! The workshops were especially interesting and I'm sure I never would have learned what I did without going to the festival. Overall, this festival helped me see music as more than just notes... I saw firsthand the passion, artistry, and care that everyone poured into their pieces. (Especially at the judges' recital) Thank you for giving me an experience I'll never forget!

Sincerely,
Samantha Ng, age 13

Dear Arthur,

This is Lay-Leng, Samantha's mom. Thank you for putting on such a fun festival, we both enjoyed being part of the event. There were many special moments: watching the talented young pianists perform, listening to the judges' commentaries and getting to know them, attending the Friday & Saturday evening performances and most of all, seeing how much fun it was for everyone there! Samantha has been most encouraged by this experience and I am sure she'll remember this for a long time!

Please convey our sincere thanks to everyone who has worked hard to make this a success! We hope we'll be able to do this again in 2018!

Regards,
Lay-Leng

FROM A PARENT:

Sent: Tuesday, June 27, 2017 2:10:59 PM

Thank you so much Mr. Houle for presenting this great opportunity to young musicians. Elia thoroughly enjoyed the entire festival (as did I). God willing we hope to attend in 2018!

All the best to you,

Tanya Muncey

FROM A PARENT:

Sent: Tuesday, June 27, 2017 12:21:42 PM

Thank you so much, Arthur, for the helpful and lovely comments for Maria's piano pieces and composition piece. What an extraordinary festival you have put together! Scott and I were so very impressed with it all! Loved you, Evelyn and the judges!

We look forward to next year!

God bless you and all our best wishes to you and all!

Michelle

FROM A TEACHER:

Sent: Tuesday, June 27, 2017 12:19:08 PM

Arthur,

Thank you for the wonderful experience again this year. I know that Heather and all the other participants truly enjoyed and learned from their time at the festival. I appreciate all the effort you put into making sure that the festival is top-notch.

Karen Greenhalgh

FROM JOHN SALMON, OUR PERENNIAL JUDGE:

Sent: Monday, June 26, 2017 2:48:12 PM

Arthur-

I appreciate this gargantuan project of tailoring 39 individual emails to the students. How many hours/days did this take you? This individualized, personal attention is one of the reasons the festival is so successful. Thank you for doing that!

I'm sure 2018 will be just as successful an event, largely because of such attentiveness. Looking forward--

JS

FROM A TEACHER:

Sent by card: June 12, 2017

Dr. Houle,

You are a rare man who truly loves children and music. Thank you for a wonderful festival experience.

Jodie Jensen

FROM A FEATURED CLINICIAN/COMPOSER:

Sent: Wednesday, July 5, 2017 7:55:58 AM

Greetings from Canada,

Yes, ditto to your comments John. Thanks for all of your hard work Arthur, and such a treat and pleasure to meet each of you and to be part of such a wonderful, student focused, festival. You will truly enjoy it, Evan, and I look forward to meeting you in 2018.

...I am looking forward to new writing projects as well as scheming to arrange possible collaborations with each of you talented and generous new musical friends.

All the best,
Martha Hill Duncan, Composer

www.marthahillduncan.com
www.redleafpianoworks.com
www.shesings.ca

FROM A TEACHER:

Sent: Monday, June 26, 2017 11:35:17 AM

Dear Evelyn and Arthur,

I want to thank you again for the lovely Festival for Creative Pianists. It was a wonderful experience for all. My involved parents enjoyed it, my students have both asked to participate again next year, and as a teacher, I was thoroughly inspired. Your adjudication sheets were detailed, encouraging, and altogether helpful for me to use with these students.

I recognize the time and effort that it took to put this on and I hope to be of more help to you next year. Also, I can't wait to spread the "first hand" word about the value of this Festival to Foothills Music Teachers Association. I will sing your praises loud and clear.

Thank you again, and also thank you to Wynn-Anne, Kevin, John, and Martha.

Sincerely,

Laura Rogers

FROM WYNN-ANNE ROSSI, OUR NEW JUDGE FOR 2017:

Sent: Tuesday, June 13, 2017 9:43:10 AM

Thank you for paying me for such an awesome, creatively refreshing experience!
WA

Sent: Sunday, June 11, 2017 8:25:08 AM

Happy Sunday, dear Arthur ~

I'm feeling all gooshy this morning. It's either creative exhaustion or heartfelt gratitude. I'm so incredibly thankful for being welcomed into this ridiculously awesome event. Yes, ALL festivals and competitions should be like this. But they're not. It takes a crazy mastermind like you to get the ball rolling toward WOW. I have so much respect for you!

And did I tell you today that I truly love your music??? It's supercool and alive with houligan energy. I can't imagine all the pun fun you've had with THAT word ...

In any case, I'm absolutely thrilled and a bit dumbfounded that you want me back next year. Thank you for supporting and appreciating the best of me!

Sincerely, your buddy Wynn-Anne

FROM EVELYN BILLBERG, PROGRAM DIRECTOR:

Sent: Sunday, June 11, 2017 5:12:02 AM

Thanks you all for another incredible Festival.
The four of you created such a special dynamic.....
The students were thrilled.

Mark your calendars....we get to do it again!!!
June 6, 7, 8, 9, 2018

Warm Regards
Ev

FROM KEVIN OLSON, JUDGE FOR 2016 & 2017 (& will return 2019)

Sent: Saturday, June 10, 2017 9:43:54 PM

Congratulations on another successful festival. You've really created something special, and seeing the kids' expressions tonight validated all of the hard work you've put into this. Now get some rest...you've earned it!

Best wishes—

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Kevin Olson, Ed.D., NCTM
Associate Professor of Music
Faculty Advisor, USU Youth Conservatory
Utah State University
<http://kevinolsonmusicclub.com/>

FROM EVELYN BILLBERG, PROGRAM DIR., TO COLUMBINE TEACHERS

Sent: Friday, June 16, 2017 8:08:16 AM

I'm writing to express my sincere and deepest appreciation for all that Columbine has done this year for the festival. It was a great festival year and your help and support made a tremendous difference. The pot-luck which was supported by the members was wonderful and our teachers, parents and students enjoyed it immensely.

I am so indebted to the teachers who helped out with the housing. The three judges and Arthur were housed by Kellie Johannik, Joyce Li, Rose Mary Miller and Heather Woll. Thank you, thank you!!!

Janet Ali was so kind to host a special evening at her home for the Directors and Judges. Have you seen her recent invitation to a special event at her home on Sunday, June 25th?? Check it out.

There are no words for the help and support from Karen Greenhalgh. She never ceases to amaze, does she??? I was sick and unable to attend the first two days and Karen stepped in, took over, and managed the events for those two days. My appreciation for Karen's support with the festival is so heartfelt!!

Here is some fascinating news about the festival. There were 39 students who played. Can you believe it??? 28 of these students came from 7 Columbine teachers. There was a total of 14 studios represented. Columbine teachers represented half.

Every teacher had students who won awards, for a total of 15 awards that went to Columbine studios:

Janet Ali	4 students
Bonnie Early	3 students
Kellie Johannik	3 students

Joyce Li	2 students
Karen Greenhalgh	1 student
Sheila Hamaker	1 student
Heather Woll	1 student

One of the most important recognitions at the Saturday evening awards ceremony..We always give a Creative Teacher Incentive Award....This award went to **two** Columbine teachers:

Janet Ali

Kellie Johannik

Those of us who got to hear their students play sure knew why the award went to them.

Congratulations Janet and Kellie!!!

Congratulations to you fantastic teachers. Again, from Arthur Houle, Luke Rackers and myself....

THANK YOU!

THANK YOU!

THANK YOU!