

# PIANO

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE STUDIO OF DR. JOVANNI-REY DE PEDRO  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO'S LIONEL HAMPTON SCHOOL OF MUSIC

[www.jdepedro.com](http://www.jdepedro.com) | [jdepedro@uidaho.edu](mailto:jdepedro@uidaho.edu)

## Meet the Studio!

**Wei “Max” He** comes to us from China via Australia and is in his second year. Last year, he won UI’s Concerto Competition with Mendelssohn’s Concerto in G minor, and was also a finalist at the Coeur d’Alene Young Artist Competition. He enjoys composing and playing video games. And practicing!

**Jessi Nutt** is from Boise, Idaho majoring in applied piano performance with nursing prerequisites. She enjoys Netflix, friends, cats, fishing, the West Coast, and has become more interested in cooking. Lana Del Rey and Elvis Presley are her favorite pop artists, as well as As I Lay Dying, Lamb of God, and Five Finger Death Punch. She intends to become an R.N., who can also play and teach piano (in case she should be a stay at home mom one day).

**Karen Hunt** is a soprano currently studying voice with Pamela Bathurst. She has performed as soloist with numerous chorales and recently played spent three weeks in Verona, Italy where she worked and performed with Opera Viva!

## Reflections of Taiwan

I love to travel. I love to ride on airplanes, meet new people, and learn about new cultures. I love to travel because every trip has taught me a little more about myself, changed my perspective of the world around me, and helped me look at my life, art, and profession in a new way.

So when an invitation came from the International Piano Performance Examinations Committee to spend five weeks adjudicating young pianists in Taiwan, I was filled with excitement! Not only would I be able to visit a new country (#30!), I would have the opportunity to immerse myself into their culture and system of training young pianists .

The trip turned out to be an overwhelming, but highly fulfilling experience. Over the course of 38 days, I heard approximately 1,258 students in nine cities. Students were grouped into three categories (beginner, intermediate, advanced), which were then subdivided into levels. Each level had three set pieces that students prepared. In addition, intermediate-level students had to present scales and sight reading. Advanced-level students, those grades five and up, had to answer questions I chose about each piece, and also received a short lesson.

### Here’s what I...

**was most impressed with:** How much influence this program had in shaping the musical future of the Taiwanese children, and the importance parents gave to the music education of their children – even in the most rural of areas.

**found most challenging:** Keeping on time! Since I was

**Isaac Simon** is a sophomore majoring in music composition with a piano concentration. Before moving to the university, he lived in the small town of Fairfield, Idaho his whole life. During this time, he became interested in music through nine years of piano lessons, and six years of guitar lessons.

**Darby Litzko** is from Rathdrum, Idaho and is a freshman majoring in biology. She started piano in third grade and singing lessons in the sixth. After that, she joined her high school's audition choir and began performing around town. Some of her greatest musical privileges have been performing at Coeur d'Alene's Fourth of July Celebration and the North Idaho Fair, recording demo tracks for a reworking of the musical *Jungle Book*, and being a performer in Idaho's All State Mixed Choir.

## Upcoming Events

**10/4:** Recital with Brian Carter, tenor. Washington State University.

**10/9:** Recital with Ferenc Czesko, violin. Yakima, WA.

**10/13:** Recital with Ferenc Czesko, violin. University of Idaho.

**10/17-22:** Solo Recitals at Delta State University (Cleveland, MS), University of Alabama-Huntsville, and Western Kentucky University.

**10/28:** Masterclass and teacher open forum. Dunkley's Music, Meridian, ID.

expected to provide written comments within the time limit (which, based on their level, was sometimes as little as 2.5 minutes), I had to be extremely concise with my comments, at the same time provide each student with a unique and individualized evaluation of their performance.

**did during my time off:** Ran (did nearly 80 miles), explored the city (especially the night markets, which satisfied my inner foodie!), and watched satirical and political commentary about the U.S. presidential election. I also played some amazing pick-up basketball games at the neighborhood courts in Kaohsiung!

**will never forget:** Chang Chih Tsen. A young, advanced-level pianist who played with technical control and artistic maturity. She was the last pianist I heard after a very long day of more than 50 students! It was also my 34<sup>th</sup> birthday. Smile!

**am excited about:** Seeing old friends, and meeting new ones.

**missed the least:** Being away from Jeremy (who, by the way, graciously allowed me to take this trip after being married only a few weeks!).

**took away most from this experience:** The desire to be a help students love the music they play. Cliché, I know! Let me explain...I often asked students which piece they liked the most and least. It was no surprise that they performed the pieces they liked better than those they didn't. I realized that they did not "like" a piece because they did not understand it. As a result, they were aimlessly playing notes.

Buddha once said that true love is born from understanding. For students to connect with a piece of music as complex as say, a Bach Invention, they need to understand the fundamental idea of counterpoint: dialogue. I compared it to a debate between Hillary and Trump, which the Taiwanese kids surprisingly understood! I guess everyone is interested in the upcoming elections.

----

This experience wouldn't have been possible without my friend and colleague, Joao Casarotti. Joao, who teaches piano and pedagogy at Southern University, adjudicated for IPPEC in 2014 and selflessly submitted my name to the organization. However, just last month, he narrowly escaped the devastating floods of Louisiana with his wife and newborn baby. They lost nearly everything. Please consider helping them as they rebuild their lives. Visit [www.gofundme.com/2khrsypg](http://www.gofundme.com/2khrsypg)