

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 | jdepedro@uidaho.edu

Feature Students- Nicholas Zollo & Elizabeth Brown

Nicholas graduated with a Masters of Music in Piano Performance and Pedagogy. Highlights over the past two years include being a finalist for the UI concerto competition, serving as President of the MTNA Collegiate Chapter, and presenting at the Australasian Piano Pedagogy Conference in Melbourne. He plans to stay in the area for a year, playing for various local churches, teaching piano, and preparing for doctoral auditions.

Elizabeth graduated with a Bachelors in Vocal Performance. During her piano studies with Dr. J, she was a finalist of the UI concerto competition, and was selected to perform at the school-wide convocation. After spending the summer visiting family, she will encounter a new beginning: training to become a nurse!

New Beginnings



Over the past few weeks, I have been constantly reminded that life is a series of new beginnings.

In mid-May, I graduated my first students as a professor at the University of Idaho.

Nicholas Zollo, who has studied with me since my first day nearly two years ago, graduated with a masters in piano pedagogy and performance. Elizabeth Brown, a vocalist who has also been very active in my piano studio for three semesters, earned her bachelors degree. (Please read about Nicholas and Elizabeth in the column to the left)

Two weeks after their commencement, I married my best friend in the French countryside after dating for nearly 12 years! She also graduated from medical school the day of our wedding, and just two days ago, she saw her first patient. Now, I find myself on a plane once again traveling to Los Angeles to witness the nuptials of my younger cousin.

All of these monumental occasions being in such close proximity to each other caused me think of what advice can I give myself, my cousin, and my wife as we enter these new phases in our lives. What advice can I also give my readers and my students?

A few years ago, I judged the Cairns Eisteddfod in Australia. Over the course of two weeks, I heard hundreds of young and talented musicians of different solo instruments, voices, and ensembles. It

Big News!!!

Dr. J is the recipient of the 2016-17 University of Idaho Olsson Grant! The project is a centennial celebration of Argentinean composer Alberto Ginastera. He will release a recording mid-2017 under the MSR Classics record label with works of Ginastera and others dedicated to his memory. Stay tuned for more updates!

Tracking Dr. J

July 20-August 26: Tour of Taiwan judging for the International Piano Pedagogy Examinations Committee.

Preview for August Newsletter

Dr. J reflects on his time training with 2016 Rio Olympic triple-jumper, Olu Olamigoke.

was one of most fulfilling and exciting artistic and educational experiences of my life! At the conclusion of competition, a television crew asked me the mother of all cliché questions, “What advice can you give these aspiring musicians?”

I’ve spent most of my professional life answering this - most of the time hopelessly trying to sound inspiring with common phrases such as “Follow your dreams,” “Practice makes perfect,” “Never give up!” But on this specific occasion, I muttered out a different answer: “In all you do, be committed.”

What is commitment?

As a pianist and teacher, *musical* commitment is high on my priority list. When I learn a new work or evaluate a student, the first question I ask myself is, “How committed am I/is this student to what I am/he or she is doing?”

What do I mean? To better understand, let me share with you my favorite definition of “commitment”:

“Commitment is that which transforms promise into reality.”

Be committed!

What we see on the printed page, and the interpretation we form in our mind are the promises we make not only to our audience, but to ourselves, the composer, and (if necessary) our students. Here are some tips to help make your promises realities:

- **Learn** about the composer and the traits that make him or her unique. What life experiences make this composition special?
- **Look** at what the composer asks. Pay attention to details, such as noticing where a crescendo begins and ends, differences in dynamics and articulations, phrases and shapes.
- **Decide** how to execute these instructions. Why do you think they are there? What’s the purpose?
- **Listen** to what is happening. Are you convinced? If not, the audience won’t be, either!
- **Ask** yourself more questions. “Can it be better?” “Am I *really* dedicated to this crescendo?”
- **Verify** your result. Record yourself or have someone listen.