

# PIANO

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

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## About Olu

Although Olu Olamigoke was a second-team All-American at Indiana University, he always felt that he never reached his full potential.

“I knew I had a lot more in the tank. I was always smaller than everybody else and I hadn’t tapped into my grown man strength,” he recently told Taft Coghill at The Free Lance-Star.

After graduating from IU in 2012, Olu interned for Apple. Despite the prospect of a full-time position, he decided to chase his Olympic dream and train with former Olympic long jumper, Skeeter Jackson.

Olu won the 2013 Nigerian national championship and was ranked in the top 10 internationally when he took 4th at the Commonwealth Games the following year.

Watch Olu in the qualifying round of the men’s triple jump on August 15 at 12:30pm GMT on [www.NBCOlympics.com](http://www.NBCOlympics.com)

## Citius. Altius. Fortius.



That’s Olu Olamigoke - 2016 Olympic triple-jumper for Team Nigeria.

I met Olu three years ago while living in Washington, D.C. He was a track and field coach at Georgetown University, as well as a trainer at my local gym.

Growing up, people described me as “well-rounded.” But they weren’t

talking about my abilities! Aside from a brief stint as a tee-baller in preschool, a soccer goalie in kindergarten (what other position would I have played?!), and my after-school fantasy boxing sessions with Rocky Balboa, I stayed away from physical activity. Even in my early adult life, the thought of “running for fun” seemed entirely boring! But as I got older, I started to think about improving my health and dropping a few pounds. Sure, having a wedding planned helped with the motivation! But so does having a family history of various health issues. So, I hired Olu as my personal trainer, and it proved to be a move that changed my body and mind.

I was skeptical of Olu at first. In my mind, I pictured trainers to be big, muscular men (or women!). Arnold Schwarzenegger types! This guy was tiny in comparison. But with his help, I engaged muscles I never knew existed, learned how to lift weights properly (no, it’s not bad for pianists), do movements my body was not accustomed to (like the power clean to squat press, which

is awful - in a good way!), and pushed my body to extremes. The sessions actually became, rather addicting, and we sometimes met three to four times a week, despite many ending in fetal position. At the end of our year together, I improved my health and developed a whole new perspective and appreciation about the learning process. (Hm...that's a great topic for a future newsletter article!)

### *Change your life and try something new!*

Trying new things is a great way to keep your mind sharp, develop creativity, and gain appreciation for yourself and your environment. And it's never too late! Here are some ideas as you seek out a new endeavor:

**Take That First Step:** Without a doubt, the hardest part of training was the realization that I needed it, and having the initiative to take that first step into the gym. Whether you're looking for something life-changing, or just a new hobby, getting started can be challenging. Find out what interests you, or what void you have in life, and research ways to fill it. There's something for everyone!

**Baby Steps After That:** I've certainly started many new projects with such gusto, it wasn't long before I burnt out, frustrated, or just plain bored. Olu made sure we started off slow. Not only to prevent injury, but to maximize the learning experience. It was also enjoyable because there was always something to look forward to.

**Be Patient:** Harvard Psychologist Dan Gilbert says, "Human beings are works in progress that mistakenly think they're finished." Mistakes are inevitable when learning something new, and that's ok. In fact, embrace it, learn from it, and reflect on it. This is how we move from experimentation to mastery.

**Believe in Yourself:** Picking up a new skill isn't going to be easy, and there is always that fear of failing. Set small, attainable goals that will help you build confidence and keep you motivated. And remember that attitude is oftentimes the difference between success and failure.

**Go for the Gold:** After achieving success with your new project, why not challenge yourself to go "faster, higher, stronger?" Marathon, anyone!?



## Preview for September Newsletter

On July 25, I walked off the airplane at Taiwan's Taoyuan International Airport to start a stint adjudicating young pianists for the International Piano Pedagogy Examinations Committee. Over the course of 5 weeks, I will listen to and assess around 1,250 piano students from across the country. These students, which range from the earliest beginner to the hobbyist adult, spend weeks if not months preparing for this graded examination. In the September newsletter, I'll recap my experience here, as well as introduce you to my 2016-17 piano studio at the University of Idaho!