

#RPPFGIVINGSTORY - 2019

RPPF & RPPF-Mini have climbed to the forefront of international summer festivals in just eight summer seasons. RP Friends of Piano is dedicated to providing broad-based education tuition-free on a vast array of topics by world-renowned mentors with diverse backgrounds. In addition to mentoring through RPPF & RPPF-Mini, we are active in providing concert platforms for alumni as well as launching special projects like the *Colina Concerto Project*.

It is difficult to select just a few comments from students and faculty who have participated in RPPF and/or Mini. We are pleased and honored that our ventures support them all in creating new pathways thereby helping them bring their dreams to life, so they can make a real difference to people and communities around the globe.

From students:

"Having had the privilege to attend RPPF for two seasons, I am immensely grateful for its impact on my musical and personal growth that extends far beyond the few wonderful weeks spent in Florida. This unique festival brings together passionate and brilliant students as colleagues, and many luminaries as teachers who expose us to a multitude of approaches on the piano, while sharing their enlightening perspectives on music and art as a whole. The legacy forums, lessons, master classes, performances and on-going musical exchanges inspire us invaluable on our journey in finding our own voice and "fingerprint" as Prof. Penneys reminds us. I will always think of RPPF as a truly special place for aspiring pianists to grow more into their own as artists and people." -Dane Ko (Hong Kong), University of Toronto

"I am so thrilled to be joining the RPPF team this coming season! Over the two summers that I attended RPPF, 2015 and 2019, this festival was such a catalyst for my musical exploration and growth. I am excited to be a part of the future of RPPF and to make this experience possible for more pianists from many countries. Thank you to Prof. Penneys for this opportunity, and here's to many more years of being a part of RPPF!" -Lara Saldanha (Japan), Mannes School of Music

"Both RPPF and RPPF Mini impacted me tremendously: I gained more confidence in performing and giving presentations; I developed enthusiasm for unknown or less known music; I started opening my ears for all kinds of new sound; last but not least, I got to know how the professional world would be like, and since then I have pushed myself to step out and do real jobs (accompanying, collaborating, teaching and performing). I deeply thank RPPF for planting the seeds in my heart and now I become a better musician!" -Zixiang Wang (China), University of Michigan

My time at the 2016 RPPF has truly been one of the best weeks of both my musical and personal life. The incredible inspiration, vitality, and generosity that I received during the festival was the result of Rebecca Penneys' leadership, the high level of the faculty, and the organization of Tabitha and administration. The amalgamation of frequent lessons (almost daily if one desires), an abundance of performance opportunities (I played on WUSF radio, the student showcase

concert, and two of the Ambassador series concerts), and many creative special topics classes on specific topics, led to a culture of intellectual progression and emotional creativity. In addition, there were fun off-days on the weekend that included a relaxing beach day and a dolphin cruise. I am touched by the creation of such a festival - it is truly a "gift" by Rebecca Penneys and all the faculty and volunteers involved; not only is it tuition free, but you can deeply feel that the faculty is genuinely invested in your growth and journey. Out of the plethora of internationally esteemed music festivals that I have attended, I can say with conviction and clarity that RPPF is inimitable and by far my favorite festival experience. Thank you so much to Rebecca Penneys, the amazing faculty, and Tabitha - I am grateful beyond words." -Andrew Yang (USA), University of Southern California

"I want to thank you deeply for your gift of RPPF-Mini last winter. It was a life-transforming experience for me that led me to the right path – fundraising for my concert series, two grants, and five lecture/masterclasses in three states, all for this season. I am getting closer and closer to my dream. When this happens, I will tell the world that RPPF-Mini was the pivotal point." -Rie Tanaka (Japan), University of Minnesota

From mentors:

"It goes without saying, I had a wonderful time at your festival — not only because it's a great level of playing and you treat us so well, but also because it's just fun to spend time with you and to be around you. I love how you moderate the Q&A — your love of music and how you care about people, the profession, (the whole world, for that matter!!) always shines through. I appreciate your inviting me to be a part of what you do at RPPF — it truly is an unusually encouraging environment and your good will infects us all! We really appreciate what you do for us!" -Alan Chow, Eastman School of Music

"For dear Rebecca: I love looking at the photos and remembering all the beautiful days with you in Tampa. There are so many wonderful things to celebrate at your unique Festival, and you are at the epicenter of it. First, your vision for it initially—your wish to help students face a daunting but positive future—your ability to raise the money to fund their tuition, include chosen faculty to guide them and interact in so many ways with them—and to choose assistants who, I swear, do not ever sleep and whose every day is filled with doing, giving and helping everyone. It is your choice of all of these facets that gives your Festival a very special and elevated stature. Thank you for including me in this year's Festival. Please give my hugs to your dear assistants, and I send you my affection and admiration—and my happiness that our enduring bond is intact." -Ann Schein, Mannes School of Music