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Editors: Photos of guest artists are available upon request. Southeastern Piano Festival artistic directors Marina Lomazov and Joseph Rackers are available for interviews.

Southeastern Piano Festival to bring world concert halls to UofSC and Columbia

Some of the world's top pianists will take the stage at the concert halls of the University of South Carolina and Columbia June 17 – 23 for the Southeastern Piano Festival.

In its 16th year, the festival offers South Carolinians the rare opportunity to hear renowned artists perform. It also provides 20 of the nation's top pre-college pianists the opportunity to take master classes with top pianists and university piano faculty as well as perform and compete for prizes.

The Southeastern Piano Festival, under the direction of Marina Lomazov and Joseph Rackers, has become one of the premier piano experiences for performance and young talent in the world.

"It's an extraordinary experience and a privilege for our School of Music to offer the highest caliber learning and performance opportunities available to young pianists," Lomazov says. "Equally exciting is what this festival brings to Columbia. People would have to travel to concert halls in New York, Paris, Milan and Shanghai to see these pianists perform. For one week each year, Columbia becomes the world's greatest concert stage."

The festival's concerts blend traditional classical works with fresh and creative multi-media presentations for classical piano in a contemporary world. As new generations discover the festival, interest and ticket sales have surged.

The festival opens Sunday, June 17 with a piano extravaganza that features riveting ensemble pieces for multiple pianos as well as duo and solo works. Lomazov and Rackers will perform alongside fellow university piano professors Charles Fugo and Phillip Bush and Southeastern Piano Festival young alumni Hugo Kitano and Aleksandra Kasman and guest pianists.

Evening concerts feature guest artists Charlie Albright, Lera Auerbach, Simone Dinnerstein and Antonio Pompa-Baldi.

Albright, artist-in-residence for Harvard University's Leverett House, a position last filled by cellist Yo-Yo Ma, will perform works by Chopin as well as his own compositions and improvisations. Auerbach, a Russian-American composer, pianist, poet and visual artist, will combine her visual and music arts in the premier of a solo work inspired by a photo exhibition. Dinnerstein will present Bach's towering masterpiece, the Goldberg Variations, a work that landed her No. 1 on the classical Billboard charts. Pompa-Baldi, who appears regularly at major concert venues globally, will showcase an array of rarely-performed classical gems as well as new works inspired by 20th-century French composer and cabaret performer Edith Piaf.

The Southeastern Piano Festival will culminate with the Arthur Fraser International Piano Competition on Friday, June 22. At the all-day event, young pianists, age 13-18, will perform and compete for more than \$9,000 in cash prizes and the opportunity to perform with the South Carolina Philharmonic Orchestra. The winners' finale concert will take place at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, June 23, followed by a closing ceremony and reception. Both Friday and Saturday's events are free and open to the public.

Rackers says the caliber of festival applicants continues to rise.

"Each year the pool of students exceeds our expectations in both scope and depth of talent," Rackers says. "The Southeastern Piano Festival is the pinnacle for the most talented young pianists in the United States to further their musical development in learning and performance."

The 2018 Southeastern Piano Festival schedule is below. While many of the festival's concerts are free, guest artist concerts require ticket purchase. Tickets are available for purchase on the festival's [website](#), where additional information about concerts, artists, student participants and master classes can be found.

Southeastern Piano Festival schedule:

Sunday, June 17

4 p.m. | Piano Extravaganza

Johnson Performance Hall, Darla Moore School of Business

Tickets: \$20 for the general public, \$5 for students and free for children under 18

Monday, June 18

4:30 p.m. | Master class and open discussion with Rebecca Penneys

School of Music Recital Hall

Admission is free

7:30 p.m. | Artist showcase featuring Lera Auerbach

School of Music Recital Hall

Tickets: \$20 for the general public, \$5 for students and free for children under 18

Tuesday, June 19

1:30 p.m. | Piano concert
Trinity Episcopal Cathedral
Admission is free

7:30 p.m. | Artist showcase featuring Charlie Albright
School of Music Recital Hall
Tickets: \$20 for the general public, \$5 for students and free for children under 18

Wednesday, June 20

4:30 p.m. Alumni showcase featuring Hugo Kitano and Aleksandra Kasman
School of Music Recital Hall
Admission is free

7:30 p.m. | Artist showcase featuring Antonio Pampa-Baldi
Trinity Episcopal Cathedral
Tickets: \$20 for the general public, \$5 for students and free for children under 18

Thursday, June 21

4:30 p.m. | Marian Stanley Tucker Lecture Series featuring John Perry and Sasha Starcevich
School of Music Recital Hall
Admission is free

7:30 p.m. | Artist Showcase featuring Simone Dinnerstein
Johnson Performance Hall, Darla Moore School of Business
Tickets: \$20 for the general public, \$5 for students and free for children under 18

Friday, June 22

10 a.m., 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. | Arthur Fraser International Piano Competition
School of Music Recital Hall
Admission is free

Saturday, June 23

Master classes featuring Simon Dinnerstein (10 a.m.), Sasha Starcevich (11 a.m.), John Perry (3 p.m.) and Antonio Pampa-Baldi (4 p.m.)
School of Music Recital Hall
Admission is free

7:30 p.m. Winners Recital
School of Music Recital Hall
Tickets: \$10 for the general public, \$5 for students and free for children under 18

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