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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 16-23 for the Southeastern Piano Festival.

In its 17th 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.

A new unique initiative at the 2019 festival is Piano X. This initiative aims to explore and showcase new voices, new formats and the new direction the piano can take as a solo and collaborative instrument in today's live music scene. The 'X' in Piano X stands for "unknown factor," the elusive "it" in the art of performance. It also stands for exploration, experimentation, and excitement. Piano X is headlined by Conrad Tao, who will perform an evening recital on Monday, June 17. The initiative also will include presentations, workshops and open panel discussions

The festival opens Sunday, June 16, 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 their colleague, piano virtuoso Phillip Bush, Southeastern Piano Festival young alumni Baron Cao, Derek Chung, and Susan Zhang, and USC alumni Nick Luby and Claudio Olivera.

In addition to Tao's performance, evening concerts feature guest artists Alessio Bax and Lucille Chung, Jon Nakamatsu and Marc-André Hamelin.

Tao, a rising star of the New York City music scene who has appeared worldwide as a pianist and composer, will perform works by Eckardt, Beethoven and others as well as one of his own compositions. As a married couple, Bax and Chung perform with chemistry, passion and virtuosity as they present works by Debussy, Poulenc, Schubert and Ravel. Nakamatsu – known internationally for the panache and elegance of his solo, concerto and chamber performances – will present works by Clementi, Beethoven and Brahms. Known for his unrivaled blend of musicianship and brilliant technique, Hamelin's performance will include works by Bach, Schumann, Weissenberg and others.

The Southeastern Piano Festival will culminate with the Arthur Fraser International Piano Competition on Friday, June 21. 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 22, 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.

"This group of students are among the most talented young artists in the country and internationally. The Southeastern Piano Festival plays an important role in their musical development as they grow into careers as concert artists."

The 2019 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 16

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 17

4:30 p.m. | "A Life in Music: Nine Big Ideas on Career and Financial Success" (David Cutler)

School of Music Recital Hall

Admission is free

7:30 p.m. | Piano X inaugurating concert

Columbia Museum of Art, 1515 Main St.

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

Tuesday, June 18

1:30 p.m. | SEPF on the Road piano concert

Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, 1100 Sumter St.

Admission is free

7:30 p.m. | Artist showcase featuring Alessio Bax and Lucille Chung

School of Music Recital Hall

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

Wednesday, June 19

4:30 p.m. | Marian Stanley Tucker Lecture Series featuring Marc-Andre Hamelin

School of Music Recital Hall

Admission is free

7:30 p.m. | Artist showcase featuring Jon Nakamatsu

Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, 1100 Sumter St.

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

Thursday, June 20

4 p.m. | Piano X Inaugural Presentation

School of Music Recital Hall

Admission is free

7:30 p.m. | Artist Showcase featuring Marc-André Hamelin

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 21

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 22

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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