

Tuesday, July 25, 2017



Dear Muneko, Jennifer, Ah Ling, Elizabeth, and Dan,

Thank you for your wonderful invitation and warm welcome to your magnificent Seal Bay Festival. It was extremely meaningful to me and I am deeply grateful for your marvelous performances of **HELIX SPIRALS**. The gorgeous setting, with its surrounding landscape and ocean, is literally magical and inspiring. Dan, you and your family spoiled us by opening your estate with such grace, treating us like family! Taking us out on your boat was above and beyond the call of duty and I LOVED it! You all gave to me a totally unforgettable, fun, musically rewarding trip! I remain in your debt!

Your individual and collective music making is elegant, colorful, bold, vibrant, inspiring and centered. The Cassatt String Quartet infuses each composer's work with empathy for individual voice and for the precise meanings of the musical materials. Your concert performance of the Fellow's works was graceful, sensitive, energized, colorful, vivid, passionate, and effervescent. I love the soul, expression and the spirit in your amazing collective sound.

The Fellows did a spectacular job and are mature and committed musicians and citizens. Loved working with each of them and having quality time together in lessons, master classes, over meals, in the car, taking walks, on the boat, etc. We have continued to stay in touch in the past days.

In addition to the week's amazing music making and discussions, I want also to send immense gratitude to you for being such gracious, generous, lovely hosts – and cooks! Yours is the Festival with the best food for sure! That Lobster feast was incredible!! I have been wearing my new scarf (which you should NOT have given me!!) and which I adore. When I showed it to Bernard, he said, "it is so you – just the perfect colors and design."

Rebecca is a gem as is Peter. That the whole festival was so beautifully recorded by Peter is golden for all.

Composers throughout history have needed the strong backing of great musicians, colleague composers, conductors, orchestras, music administrators, music scholars and music lovers, music supporters who are of the depth, soul, excellence, vision, and care as you all are. Without such support, composition is an impossible endeavor at which to improve.

As such, I feel fortunate for your personal investments in my life's work. Our art form at large greatly needs visionary and generous performers and leaders, such as you all, so that all can work together to further music's flexible, diverse capacity and innate power.

It meant so much to me to be with you all, to work together, and to share our love of and passion for music and life. Here is my complete, heartfelt appreciation!

Warmly and with endless hugs!!
XXX

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Augusta Read Thomas'.

Gusty

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