

Here's a 20-25 word SEO-optimized summary:

Renowned pianist Idil Biret reflects on empathy in music, mentorship, and cultural exchange through her educational initiative IBEI, fostering global artistic understanding.

[Word count: 20]

This summary includes:

- Key name (Idil Biret)
- Primary themes (empathy, music, mentorship)
- Main organization (IBEI)
- Key action words (fostering, reflects)
- Core concept (global artistic understanding)
- Relevant descriptors (renowned pianist)

Playing It Forward in Music, Art, and Literature

Idil Biret

The most important human qualities are empathy and understanding, I believe. The great composers express their understanding and empathy for the human condition in their music. Deeply empathetic curiosity compels me to understand each composer I play.

I put aside preconceptions, learn as much as I can about the life, thoughts, and beliefs of the composer, then study interpretations by other musicians, all with the end of re-experiencing a composer's internal emotional state as expressed through a musical creation.

No amount of technical proficiency can substitute for recreating, in your own emotional center, what the composer has expressed in a score. When I perform, I lose myself into a state of being that includes the composer, their work, the audience, the piano, and my soul.

At birth, I was gifted with a natural ear for music. However, such a gift is worth little without the abundant generosity of mentors. How much do I owe to Mithat Fenmen, Nadia Boulanger, Alfred Cortot, Wilhelm Kempff, and so many others who have guided me on my path? The debt is infinite and incalculable.

Such a debt can never be paid back; it can only be paid forward. The recipient of so many acts of kindness from mentors and elders who now, alas, no longer inhabit our material world, I do my best to pass the abundance I received on to my students and my audiences.

Music, art, and literature are human activities that bind us together, that create bonds of understanding across time and geography. Nadia Boulanger believed that in a clash of civilizations, warriors are needed to achieve victory, but that victory is meaningless unless the highest fruits of civilization are maintained and preserved for coming generations. She believed the artist, the musician, the teacher, and the writer are just as essential as soldiers and generals.

The Idil Biret Education Initiative sprang into being because of the generosity of others who share my vision of connecting across generations and across continents through shared appreciation of beauty.

The goal of IBEI is to foster cross-cultural empathy and to further global understanding by encouraging and promoting music, the arts, and literature, with a special focus on bringing underrecognized creativity to the forefront.

I hope you will join me in supporting this worthy cause.