



THE Summerylen TIMES

Issue #5

May 2008

Welcome to the May Issue of the Summerylen Times!

Greetings and Happy Spring from Summerylen Music! In our May issue, we continue our series on practicing effectively and efficiently with a new article about practicing in a healthy way. Try out the practice tips in this month's newsletter to make practicing a more comfortable, healthy experience!

Playing Healthy - How to Play Your Instrument Without Injury

Most people know that athletes can easily injure themselves, but did you know that musicians are at risk for injury as well? Playing a musical instrument is a physical activity just like playing sports, and without the right approach, musicians can risk hurting themselves. Stress and overuse injuries caused by intense practice can hinder or even end promising musical careers, so it is important to learn how to practice in a healthy way. By using these five tips, you can be well on your way to a lifetime of injury-free music making!

One of the easiest ways to become a healthier musician is to exercise. Exercising strengthens and stretches the body, and gives you greater ability to tackle the demands of playing your instrument. Playing sports, doing stretches, or just being active will all give you benefits when you play your instrument. You can even use your exercise routine to work on specific areas of your body that you use while playing.

Since playing an instrument is a physical activity, make sure to drink plenty of water when you play. Your body needs water to help transport nutrients to your cells, dispose of waste products, and lubricate your joints and tissues. For brass players, drinking water can keep your throat, mouth, and lips from becoming dry as you blow air through your instrument, and can help the small muscles in your face work at their optimum level throughout a practice session.

Don't push yourself. Maybe you can play that difficult passage faster by straining your hands, but is nailing that passage worth hurting yourself? If you train yourself to play strenuously, you may end up with injuries that can keep you from playing at all.



If you feel pain or discomfort while you're playing, take it seriously! Pinpoint the pain, determine what's causing it, and then take the time to fix it. Training yourself to use your body in a relaxed, healthy way can be tedious, but the result will be your ability to play well without hurting yourself. It's better to take the time to train your hands to play that tough passage in a relaxed way, than to permanently damage them by playing strenuously.

Likewise, long, intense practice isn't necessarily good practice. Since you are engaging in physical activity, it's important to take breaks when you practice. Organizing your practice so you have alternating blocks of activity and rest can help you achieve excellent results without strain. Also, remember that practice is mental as well as physical, and engage your mind to make learning music more efficient. Instead of trying to physically force a trouble spot to correct itself, use strategies like isolating difficult notes and playing slowly to help you better understand the passage. Ten minutes of focused, purposeful practice can be more effective than hours of unfocused practice, and much easier on your body.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2-->

PLAYING HEALTHY, CONTINUED...

Every part of your body has its own natural position and movement pattern; for example, the wrists are naturally flexible, and the fingers naturally curve. Keeping your movements as natural as possible while playing can reduce the possibility of injury. Compare the position of different parts of your body when you're standing or sitting normally with when you're playing. Do your shoulders rise up when you hold your instrument? Do you have extra tension in your jaw when you play? During practice, observe how you're using your body. If any parts are moving awkwardly, make adjustments to help them move more naturally. Keeping your movements natural can make playing healthier and more comfortable.

By exercising, drinking water, practicing smarter, and understanding your body's natural movements, you can give yourself years of musical enjoyment and stave off painful overuse injuries. Try one of these tips today, and put yourself on the road to healthy music-making!

VOTE!

The North Carolina primary is over, but you still have the chance to vote! With the help of the fine graphic designers at Vigor Creative, Inc., Summerglen is getting a new look. In the coming weeks, we'll have a new logo, website, and business cards. But we need your help...



Please visit our blog at <http://www.summerglen-music.com/blog> and take a look at our logo samples. Leave a comment and tell us which logo you like and why! We'll show you the finished logo at the Summerglen Shindig on June 7th!

Diving In

I was looking at a weblog dedicated to freelancers (mostly writers and graphic designers), which had a recent post putting types of freelancing jobs into categories. As a freelance musician, I've seen all of them! One they mentioned was the "Fake It Till You Make It" job. It got me thinking about the most rewarding jobs I've done as a musician. Most of them were ones that I really wasn't totally ready for. Even my first rock band in High School, I really had no idea what I was doing - I didn't even listen to the kind of music they were playing. The thing is, though, I got in there and gave it my all. I practiced as much as I could, and I learned the music. It turned into a growth experience, instead of just another job. When I started in the symphonic world, same story. Study, Practice, Learn, Grow.

continued below...



Concert Calendar

Some family-friendly concerts in the Triangle area

Friday, May 16 at 11:30am, Meymandi Concert Hall in Raleigh

Feel like taking a day off? Come hear a special daytime performance
Beethoven's Sixth Symphony.

Saturday, May 17 from 11:30am-6pm, Moore Square Park, Downtown Raleigh

Artspllosure is a FREE day of family fun featuring great music by the John
Brown Quintet, Mixed Water, Shalini, Otis Taylor, Nathan Asher & more..

Saturday, May 17 at 7:30pm, Memorial Hall at UNC

Ever wondered what that music is in the movies (and the newest Gatorade
commercials)? It's Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*, and you can hear the whole
thing here for \$15!

Saturday, June 7th at 2pm, outdoors in Fuquay-Varina

Elvis tribute artist Keith Henderson performs his famous "Illusions of the King"
show at the Celebrate Fuquay Festival. For more info, call 552-1430

Saturday, June 7th at 7pm, Percolator Coffeeshop in Raleigh, NC

2nd SemiAnnual Summerglen Shindig

Summerglen students, this is your night to shine! After student performances,
enjoy "The Life of the Relaxed Get-Together", the Summerglen Duo.

Diving in, continued...

It's important to know your limits, and not misrepresent yourself as something you are not. But, if you've got a clear picture of your abilities and your weaknesses, sometimes throwing yourself a challenge is the best way to overcome an obstacle. If you never take a job you're scared of, you'll never get better. The perfect time will never come. Challenge yourself to step out of your comfort zone and surprise yourself with just how good you really are!