Welcome to our first issue!

Welcome to the first issue of the Summerglen Times, the monthly newsletter dedicated to helping you become a better musician!

The articles we’ll feature in the Times are designed to take you further on your musical journey by giving you new practice ideas to try each month.

In addition to music-related articles, each issue of the Times will include listings of upcoming concerts in the Triangle area, entertaining columns, and features about Summerglen students and their families. We look forward to sharing our latest happenings with you in 2008, and wish you a year of musical success!

New Year’s Resolutions for Musicians…and How to Keep Them!

January is a time when many people create resolutions to eat healthier, lose weight, or make more money. But as we know, by February, many of these resolutions are already abandoned! As a musician, it may be tempting to resolve to “play better” in 2008. But like the resolutions above, these general musical desires often fall by the wayside very quickly. So, how can you stick to your guns and really become a better musician this year? Here are some ideas to get you started.

Make your goals SMART

The problem with many resolutions is vagueness. If you resolve to be a great jazz trombonist, it’s difficult to know where to begin or what to do to achieve your goal. This is where SMART goals can help. SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely. Making your resolution very specific, giving yourself a deadline, and making sure it’s possible will help you turn your dream into reality. “Be a great jazz trombonist” is a vague, general order. But “By February, I will be able to improvise over two choruses of the Bb blues without getting lost,” tells exactly what you want to happen, and when, and is something you can do in the time you’ve allowed. SMART goals give your desires direction. Once you’ve made the goal, just follow the directions!

Take weekly action

Now that you have your goals, look at them weekly and break them apart to find your Next Actions—specific things you can do to move closer to your goal. If my SMART goal is “By February, I will be able to improvise over two choruses of the Bb blues without getting lost,” my Next Action might be, “Make sure I have my Bb scale memorized,” or “Listen for patterns on a blues recording.”

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Resolutions, continued:

A Next Action like, “Play two choruses of blues every time I practice, no matter how bad I think it sounds!” can help you develop a habit of practicing. Getting yourself into the habit of working toward your goal will help you become a better musician every day.

Reward Yourself!
Setting detailed goals and working towards them each day takes discipline and hard work. So, when you’ve accomplished a goal or completed several Next Actions, celebrate! Treat yourself to something you enjoy, like a favorite TV show, snack, or time with friends. Most of all, take the time to feel great about your accomplishments. And then, repeat the process until you’re the musician of your dreams!

For more information about SMART goals, please visit: http://www.topachievement.com/smart.html

CD Review Corner

It has been said many times that jazz was born out of African rhythms, but most people just leave it at that, without much more detail. At best, the melodic tom playing of Elvin Jones and Art Blakey seems to conjure some deeper connection, but what is the true root of jazz in Africa?

With Red Earth, Dee Dee Bridgewater chooses to answer the question by taking jazz right back to Africa, the country of Mali, specifically, and putting it right into the source. The result is the most compelling blend of traditional Malian music and straight-ahead jazz that has yet been presented. Playing jazz standards and traditional Malian tunes with a band comprised of American and Malian musicians and instruments, they show a seamless connection between the two styles. From the opening talking-drum solo on Afro-Blue (a jazz standard originally used to showcase the Afro-Cuban ties in jazz music), it’s apparent that the listener is in for a burning session of new sounds, driving rhythms, and an all-together fun listen.

I’ve heard lots of American - African crossovers in the past, but they’ve always seemed forced, usually from the Americans who don’t really understand the music they’re appropriating for their project. This one gets it right, from beginning to end!

Concert Calendar

Some family-friendly concerts in the Triangle area

January 18 & 19 at 8 pm, and January 20 at 3pm at Meymandi Hall--NC Symphony tribute to Nat King Cole

January 19th at 8 pm at Temple Theatre, Sanford--Heart of Carolina Jazz Orchestra with Drummer Joe Chambers

February 1st, 8:00 pm at Meymandi Hall, Raleigh--Master trombonist Doug Yeo with Triangle Brass Band

February 2nd, 3:00 pm at Asheboro High School, Asheboro--All-District Band concert

Tell Your Friends...and Get Paid!

Are you happy with the way you sound since you started studying at Summerglen Music? Please tell your friends about us!

If you refer a friend to Summerglen, and they sign up for a month of lessons, you get one lesson FREE!