



# THE Summeryglenn TIMES

Issue #4

April 2008

*Welcome to the April Issue of the Summeryglenn Times!*

Spring is here, flowers are blooming, grass is growing, and our lake is full and ready for swimming! There is nothing like spending all day outside enjoying the lovely spring weather. But as musicians, if we want to get better at our instruments, we have to take the time to practice even when it's beautiful outside. We at Summeryglenn want to help you keep up your practice schedule AND enjoy the great outdoors. To do that, we're dedicating our April, May, and June issues of *The Summeryglenn Times* to showing you how to practice more efficiently, so that you can get a lot done in a short amount of time, and spend the rest of the day basking in the sun!

## Setting Up a Productive Practice Space

An easy way to make your practice more effective is to set up a special place and time to practice each day. Many people practice in noisy, distracting places, or try to squeeze in practice whenever they find some free time. Doing either of these things can make practice difficult and unrewarding. Practice is a focused activity like studying, so finding a quiet practice spot and setting up a special time to practice can help you become a better musician in less time.



picture courtesy JeanPierreG. on flickr

Begin by finding a place that helps you concentrate. Many people work best in a quiet place that is out of the way of other people, like in a bedroom or garage. Practicing in a private area cuts down on distractions, keeps you focused on the task at hand, and makes you more able to hear what you're playing. Choosing a practice space with some privacy can help you detect and fix mistakes that you might miss in a busier area.

Make sure your practice spot has adequate lighting and enough space for you and your instrument to move freely. Having plenty of light in your practice area makes it easier to see what you're doing, and helps you stay focused on your work. Making sure you have enough space to move around comfortably can help you practice more effectively as well. If your practice spot is cramped, you won't feel comfortable and won't enjoy practicing as much, and may be at risk for developing bad posture habits. On the other hand, if your practice spot is comfortable and well-lit, practicing will be much easier and healthier.

Next, equip your space with materials you'll need for a successful practice session. At the very least, you need your instrument, a chair and a music stand. Since playing music is a physical activity, having a glass of water nearby is a good idea. Drinking water during practice keeps your body hydrated and working its best. Keep a pencil, your music books, and a notebook to jot down what you're working on nearby as well. As you begin learning more advanced concepts, consider adding a metronome and a tuner to your practice space, so you can do more detailed practice. Keep all your materials in your practice spot; that way, you can spend your time practicing, instead of searching for your stuff.

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

## Summeryglenn Workshops!

Do you want to learn more about music and creativity? Come to a Summeryglenn Music workshop!



**April 12**

### Introduction to Hand Drums

Learn basic rhythms and techniques for hand drums like the djembe, conga, and dumbek!

**May 10**

### Creative Improvisation

Learn to make up your own music on drums, keyboards, and mallet instruments.

**June 5 - July 31**

### Women Embracing Creativity

Ladies, get ready to discover your inner creativity! Whether you want to be an artist or would like more excitement in your day, this 8-week class will help you break free of creative blocks and learn to nurture your inner creative artist!

## Concert Review Corner

What better way to spend a cloudy Sunday than listening to beautiful symphonic music? The Raleigh Civic Symphony's *Around the World* concert on Sunday, April 6 was quite a treat. The concert featured selections that came from countries all over the world, including the Czech Republic, Finland, China, and the United States. The entire concert was enjoyable, but the real treat was in the second half!

Jennifer Chang, a celebrated guzheng player, treated the audience to a beautiful solo performance as well as a performance of ZhanHao He's *Lamentation of a Hero: General Yue Fei*, a concerto for guzheng and orchestra. Chang's playing was beautifully expressive, and her instrument itself had a gorgeous tone. In addition to the great musicianship, the structure of the auditorium lent itself to the music as well; the low ceilings made it so the sound didn't have much space to project. During the concerto, the low ceilings made the orchestra sound distant and ethereal, like whispered stories floating back from ancient times. It was the perfect setting for a piece about a 12th century war hero.

The best part is, the RCS is performing the concerto again, along with Tan Dun's multimedia cello concerto *The Map*, at NC State University on April 20th. If you're in Downtown Raleigh that day, definitely check out the RCS. They perform innovative repertoire at every concert and feature extensive program notes to help you understand the music, all while keeping ticket prices under ten bucks!

## Practice Space, Continued



After you've found a nice spot and equipped it with helpful materials, consider when you'll practice. When you leave your practice time to chance, it's easy to forget to do it. Try setting up a regular practice time each day and sticking to it. Practicing at a certain time every day gets you into the habit of regular practice--and regular practice makes you a better musician!

While you don't want to have too many distractions in your practice area, you can still make it your own. Hanging up pictures of your favorite musicians or adding decorations can make your practice space more comfortable and inviting. As long as you have plenty of space to move and your decorations aren't in the way, decorating your place can make practicing more fun.

People create special places to work, read, and even bowl! Creating your own special place and time to practice can help you get more done, make practicing easier, and encourage you to do it more often!

### Want to learn more about the guzheng?

Check out <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guzheng> or search "guzheng" on YouTube for some great videos!

## Concert Calendar

Some family-friendly concerts in the Triangle area

**Saturday, April 12 at 8pm, Jones Auditorium at Meredith College**

The Raleigh Symphony and Meredith College vocalists perform beautiful opera arias

**April 17-19 at 8pm, and April 20 at 2pm at Carolina Theatre in Durham**

Durham Savoyards present Gilbert and Sullivan's operetta *The Yeoman of the Guard* (fun show alert!!)

**Sunday, April 20 at 4pm at Stewart Theatre, NC State University**

Raleigh Civic Symphony presents China Dreams: Tradition and Technology

**Sunday, April 20 at 5pm at Trinity Park in Durham**

The Durham Symphony presents a fun outdoor pops concert

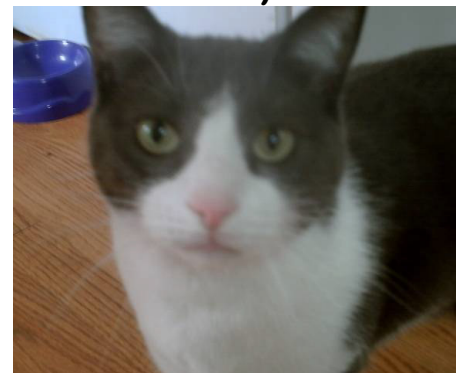
**Sunday, April 27 at 4pm at Stewart Theatre, NC State University**

Raleigh Civic Chamber Orchestra presents French Delights - The Music of Debussy, Milhaud, and Poulenc. A must-see for clarinet players!

**Sunday, April 27 at 3pm at Cameron Park in Hillsborough**

Another Durham Symphony outdoor pops concert, in case you missed the other one!

## Hello, Velvet!



Velvet the cat is the newest addition to the Summerglen family! Before coming to Summerglen, Velvet had a rough couple of years living with dogs and rowdy teenagers. Now he enjoys watching birds, scratching chairs with his non-existent claws, and eating Christina and Andrew's butter, Velvet especially enjoys seeing all of the Summerglen families at their weekly lessons!