



Happy November from Summerglen Music!

Hope you're enjoying the nice fall weather, the pretty colors, and a break from campaign ads! Since Thanksgiving is on its way, this issue focuses on gratitude--a feeling that can give us a rosier outlook on life AND help us play better as well. One thing we are very thankful for here at Summerglen is *you*! Thank you for making us your musicians of choice; we are so grateful to count you as our friends!



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An Attitude of Gratitude! How to be a Thankful Musician

As growing musicians, we spend much of our time trying to get better at what we do. We're always striving to break our bad playing habits, learn new things, and become better at our instruments. Although it's important to focus on making progress, it can be equally important to sit back and truly appreciate where we are on our musical journeys. With Thanksgiving coming up, try taking some time to think of some things you're grateful for as a musician. You might just play better as a result!

Being grateful doesn't just help your playing; it can bring you less stress and better health as well. According to psychology professor Robert Emmons, "Gratitude research is beginning to suggest that feelings of thankfulness have tremendous positive value in helping people cope with daily problems, especially stress." In addition to being less stressed, grateful people also tend to be more optimistic, a trait that has been shown to boost the immune system. For musicians, less stress and better health can lead to stronger, more confident performances, less worry about bad playing days, and more productive practice. So how can you reap all these wonderful benefits? Bringing more gratitude into your life is as simple as shifting your perspective. Here are five easy ways that you can be thankful for the way you play.

1. Be thankful for your progress.

Look back in your book and play a song that you did several months ago. Remember when it was hard to play? Now it's easy, because you kept on practicing and working hard! Take a minute to smile and enjoy the things you've accomplished during your musical career.

2. Be on the lookout for little things to celebrate.

Major progress isn't the only thing you can be grateful for. If you nail that tricky spot in measure 5, that's something to celebrate and be thankful for. If you play a gorgeous note, take a second and express your appreciation.

3. Give thanks for your body and mind.

As musicians, we ask the tiniest muscles in our body to do very complex, precise things, and we train our brains to be able to juggle a number of processes at once. Think



for a minute about how wonderful it is that your body and mind can do these things, like buzzing your lips to create exact pitches, playing different rhythms with each of your arms and legs, and reading music with ease. Reflect on how cool it is that we can train our bodies and minds to make beautiful music.

4. Turn a bad day around--appreciate your losses.

Nobody likes losing an audition, or having a rotten playing day, but even bad situations offer things to be grateful for. If you lose an audition for an honor band, you can be thankful for the day of relaxation you'll get while everyone else is playing for 8 hours straight. If you're having a bad playing day, be thankful that this isn't how you sound on a *good* day! Often, when we find something to be thankful for, we can see humor in a bad situation, and even learn from it so we can do better next time.

5. Be grateful you're a musician!

Musicians are unlike any other kind of people. We have the ability to tell stories and express the deepest, most powerful emotions in a way that words cannot. As a musician, you share a common bond with great artists throughout history, from the ancient drummers of Africa to Mozart to Alicia Keys. Few people have the discipline and dedication to be musicians--and you DO!

When you practice appreciating your musical abilities, you may find that progress comes more quickly and playing becomes more fun. Think of something you appreciate today--it'll help you enjoy the way you play!

