



# Breathe & Play

Performance Toolkit



# *A Musician's Mindfulness*

*I am grateful for all the musicians who have come before me, men and women who played in service to music. I offer my passion, humility, discipline, and joy to this tradition. May the music that I share today as a gift to the world flow not only from me, but also through me.*

# *Intentions*

## Peaceful Mind, Peaceful World

*May I benefit all beings who feel the vibrations from this instrument. I will add a good wish with every note and a peaceful thought with every phrase and verse.*

*May this music change the world for the better, beginning with my peaceful heart. I find joy and meaning in making music and giving it away – as a gift from the heart.*



## Loving Kindness

*May my music enter the world gently. May its spirit increase generosity. May this be my gift to friends and strangers alike: deep, abiding joy.*

## Ahimsa, “Non-Harming”

*May all beings who hear these sounds absorb their peaceful intent and be filled with a spirit of well-being and non-harming. May this instrument become a tool of loving-kindness; may its music make a better world.*



A misty mountain landscape with a sea of clouds and distant peaks. The scene is bathed in a soft, blue light, suggesting dawn or dusk. The foreground shows dark, silhouetted trees and a misty valley. The middle ground is dominated by a thick layer of white clouds that fills the valley and surrounds the base of the mountains. In the background, several layers of mountain ranges are visible, their peaks softened by the distance and the atmosphere. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

# Contemplations

## Vibrations

*Focus your awareness inwardly and locate your heart rhythm. Let your thumb and fingers vibrate the soundboard of your instrument in sync with the heart's drumbeat. Stay with that rhythm and let the music carry you out and back, out and back—at home in the universal groove, grounded in the center of the ever-expanding universe.*

## Silence

*Tune your ears to the spaces surrounding the notes. Observe how the silence holds the music. Are you hearing the music and the silence equally? Are you hearing with your skin? Do the soles of your feet hear as well?*

*Close your eyes and listen with the crown of your head—with your whole body—as the waves of sound move through the silence.*

## Elements

*Focus on the senses that bring us into awareness in this moment. Feel the body's weight on the earth, our fingers on the strings. Feel at home in the air element, where we set musical notes free. We borrow from the planet the elements of earth, fire, and water in our bodies—just the same as every musician, past, present, and emerging.*

## Reconnecting

*With a heart of gratitude, play to make connections with all your relations: parents, siblings, children, friends, all beings, and seven generations of ancestors. With this music, may we harmonize where there is conflict, balance what is crooked, heal what is broken, and ground what is uprooted. Through the air that touches all equally, may I bless all beings with the sounds that my music creates.*

## Ensemble

*In the synergy of ensemble playing, may I find the space where the band touches and harmonizes; may our heartbeats synchronize; may our breathing connect and find the flow.*






# *Exercises*

Deep Breathing with  
Vocal Exhalations

Eight Brocades

Growing Tree Roots

Swinging Arms Qigong



*This booklet arises from the Mindfulness and Performance Class at the 2025 Swannanoa Gathering's Guitar Week. We hope that as you reach for your instrument in the green room before the show, or with the church choir before the service, or maybe five minutes before the podcast, you will remember to use Intentions to focus your musical gift. Further, we hope the Contemplations in this booklet will spark creative ways to expand the experience of making music to benefit the world.*

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# Acknowledgements

Breathe & Play: Performance Toolkit

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Special thanks to Steve Baughman, Janis Ian,  
Carrie Newcomer, Robin Bullock, and  
Jane Roman Pitt.

Design and Production: Laura Tan

Editor: Jerry Hsu



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