

AMBASSADOR

American Suzuki Talent Education Center

University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point
College of Fine Arts and Communication

*Changing lives by providing the best in performance,
creativity, and expression*

February 2004

From the Director's Desk

By Dee Martz

Rewards, Praise and Learning

Studies about the effect of rewards on behavior in children have given some thought-provoking results. In these experiments the children were divided into three groups; one group expected a reward, one group received an unexpected reward, and the third group received no reward at all. The children spent time working puzzles and were rewarded or unrewarded as planned. Several days later, the same group of children were brought into a room full of many different activities, including some puzzles. The unrewarded group showed continued interest in the puzzles. Likewise the unexpectedly rewarded group still showed interest in working the puzzles. Surprisingly enough, the children who did the puzzle activity with the expectation of a special reward showed a decline in interest in the puzzles.

The researchers learned that the children who worked the puzzles without expecting external rewards had derived personal satisfaction from the activity and in the process had developed the inner desire to continue working with the puzzles. Those children who worked the puzzles with the expectation of reward showed little or no continuing interest in the puzzles because they had derived satisfaction from the material reward but not from the activity. The rewarded children developed little or no interest in the activity itself.

Yes, an occasional reward can really help. This is especially true when trying to get a new activity started. But beware of frequent use. Practicing can soon become a time for bargaining. If your child is pushing and manipulating for bigger and better rewards for each practice session, each new skill learned or each new piece, it is time to re-evaluate the place of rewards in the learning process.

Like rewards, praise must be used thoughtfully. It must be both sincere and specific. Children are very perceptive. Occasional sincere praise always gives a big boost in self esteem. Unfortunately, constant praise does not have the same effect. This is especially true if the praise is general in nature. "Super!" "Great job!" or even "Nice big tone!" gradually becomes meaningless. It is better to use specific comments such as "Super! You played every slur in the new section." "Great job with the dynamics in the second half!" or "Nice big tone in the part with all the string crossings!" Just as the most

successful practice sessions are designed to accomplish very specific goals, praise is most effective when it takes note of specific accomplishments.

Parents and teachers need to reflect on the fact that Dr. Suzuki calls the method he developed the "Mother Tongue" method. It helps to remember how you felt and reacted when your child was learning to speak. New sounds and new words were given instant feedback. It was easy to sit back, relax and enjoy each stage of learning. Positive encouragement abounded. The unshakable belief in the ability of the child to learn to speak its mother's language made enjoying the process of learning and the accomplishment of each of the many small steps seem very natural. It should be the same way when your child learns music. An unshakable belief in the child's ability to learn is the biggest step toward creating the environment in which learning will occur. Take time to celebrate and to enjoy the process of learning as well as the product that results. If you are looking forward to the day when effective practicing will come as a result of your child's inner drive, make sure that stimulating the desire to learn is an important part of each day.

Inside the Teacher's Brain

By Mary Hofer

All Right! I am skating and I haven't fallen yet. I call to my daughter Beth, "Look! I'm getting my twizzles!" "Mom, it's not twizzles, it's swizzles, but you're doing great." I am very proud of myself.

I have never been a sports fan so I was really irritated when my teacher and mentor, Mrs. Marjorie Kampenga, retired and became addicted to sports. Lessons always had to be scheduled around the Packers, Olympics, golf, etc. Mrs. Kampenga would try to relate what she was seeing in sports to music and vocal production. "Look at their rhythm, look at the release, how strong and free they are."

Now that I have taken up my own sport of skating, I have had some interesting revelations. There are some very good lessons we can learn through sports. It is important to understand that music is very athletic. We are using muscles throughout our entire body.

Just like any good athlete, prior to actually making music we need to warm up and eliminate interfering tensions. This should include stretches, breathing and mental preparation for what we intend to do. Take the time to begin right! Following large physical warm-ups begin with simple skills. Don't jump right into the hardest part of a piece or song.

In my case, just getting around the rink without falling is a great feat. As I skate slowly around to get my bearings, I begin to feel more confident. I'm ready to begin practicing my new skills. I begin by reviewing the simple skills I have already learned before trying something new or difficult.

I am learning swizzles; I am obsessed with mastering them. All around the rink, over and over. Suddenly I notice they are getting worse and I am feeling tension in muscles I didn't know I had. I keep going and they're getting worse. My son calls to me; he needs something. I stop the swizzles and skate over to him to talk for awhile. Off he goes and now I'm back to my swizzles. They work great again!

Aha! Another important point to remember! When practicing a skill, work to your peak and then stop for awhile. Sometimes in order to keep going we start adding unnecessary tension to achieve our goals. Stop while you are ahead; try something else and then come back.

After three days of practicing in a row, I'm loving swizzles. Now I decide to begin backward swizzles. I'm beginning to get the hang of them, but we get busy and for three days, there is no practice.

When I get back to the rink, my mind knows what it wants to do, but my body takes awhile to get back into the swing of things. I feel like I'm starting over again. The backward swizzles that I had just started, forget it. I am back to the beginning. It would have been much to my benefit to keep practicing a short while every day instead of three days of long practice and three days without practice. Now my muscles don't respond as quickly as I want them to and I am frustrated.

Today it is very cold. I really do not want to go skating. My daughter is a mover. "Mom, I need to practice. I want to pass into the next class!" Heavy sigh! Off we go. Once we are there, I'm on the ice. I'm practicing over and over again and I'm loving it.

In sports, there is always a coach encouraging and motivating the student as they practice. Dr. Suzuki has always said we need a positive parent (in my case, child) encouraging and gently pushing us to the instrument. Once we're there and begin practicing, half the battle is over.

There is a definite rhythm to this skating. It is a balance of tension versus freedom, finding the correct amount of each and knowing when to add strength and keep the freedom. I need to

mentally and physically know what it is I am trying to achieve. It is a matter of being in and out of control at the same time.

Perhaps when I graduate to Tot 2, I will have a better handle on this concept. For now, I will slowly keep trying to get those swizzles. I have the rest of my life to practice and enjoy learning to skate.

Pat D'Ercole and Colleagues in Recital

Pat D'Ercole will present a violin recital in celebration of what would have been Miss Aber's 90th birthday. Since her retirement, it was Miss Aber's custom to give a recital every five years i.e her 70th, 75, 80th and 85th. This recital will be played by Prof. Pat in her stead and will be performed on Miss Aber's David Tecchler violin. Thus, the program selections were chosen because they have some connection with memories of Miss Aber, her teacher and mentor.

The program will open with Dvorak's *Sonatina*, Op. 100 for violin and piano. Ann Marie Novak will be the collaborating pianist. The *Sonatina* was one of the first pieces Prof. Pat studied with Miss Aber. Miss Aber was very proud of her Bohemian heritage and, in fact, Prof. Pat had the opportunity to visit Prague with her, including Dvorak's birthplace.

The *Largo* from the unaccompanied Bach *Sonata in C* will follow. This piece will sound familiar to Suzuki violin students because a simpler version of it appears in Book 8 with piano accompaniment. At one of her first lessons, Prof. Pat arrived to find Ms. Aber sitting in a chair and surrounded by 6-8 open editions of the Bach partitas and sonatas. Always the learner, she was comparing them to get insights into the rationale for fingerings, bowings and phrasing of each of the editions.

Mrs. Fuller will join Prof. Pat in the *Etude in g minor* by Wieniawski. Miss Aber had actually planned to play this piece on this occasion and she and Pat had read through it a couple of times shortly after her 85th birthday. Dr. Leviton will join Pat on two of the eight duets for violin and cello, the *Cradle Song and Gavotte* by Gliere which Miss Aber performed with exquisite tone color and expression. The recital will conclude with three short pieces for violin and piano; La Capricieuse by Elgar, Nocturne in c# minor, (Op. posth.) by F. Chopin/Milstein both performed on previous Aber recitals) and the Scherzo-Tarantella, op. 16 by Wieniawski.

There will be two performances of the recital. The first is on Feb. 8 at 2:00 at the new First Presbyterian Church in Marshfield (Lincoln and Adler Sts.) The second will be on Feb. 15 at 2:00 in Michelsen Hall. All are invited to attend and admission is free.

Voila Viola

By Dee Martz

You may be surprised to learn that there is a bonus to having viola marathons in my studio at the Suzuki House. During cookie break at the in January we listen to the Telemann Concerto from Suzuki book 4 performed by Rainer Moog and the Hamburg Soloists. The students were full of opinions about the performance. It was clearly exciting to hear the piece performed with string orchestra instead of the piano on the Suzuki CD. The students all commented on the speed of the second movement (Allegro) and wondered if the fourth movement (Presto) would be even faster. Perhaps the most interesting difference was "all those extra notes" in the Rainer Moog version. This gave us the opportunity to discuss the practice of improvisation in the Baroque period.

The CD is one I have mentioned before as a good choice for your collection. It is still possible to order it through Amazon sellers but there are not many copies left.

Music for Viola and Orchestra vol. 1--Arte Nova Classics
A quick search confirms that many other CD's include the Telemann Viola Concerto so don't give up if you can't find this specific version.

The real message is that the viola students at the marathon really loved hearing one of their Suzuki pieces performed to the highest level of artistry. The bonus is that any CD of the Telemann Concerto will also include other works that will broaden young violists' musical horizons.

Notes from the Endpin

Welcome back Celli. I hope you had a healthy and happy holiday season. I want to thank all of the cellists who participated in the holiday concert at the Edgewater Manor. It was a lot of fun for me and I know it was well-received by the audience who enjoyed your performance and appreciated the wonderful music that you shared with them. Look for another similar event in the spring!

Marathons will continue with our same schedule although we will shuttle back and forth between buildings due to construction.

The times will remain the same:

9-9:20-Twinklers
9:20-to 10:15-Books 1-3
10:30-12-Books 4 and above

Please see me if you have questions about marathon locations.

Student News

Kelley and Stacey Rolak and Christopher and Allison Patchett played the Telemann Concerto in G for 4 violins and holiday music at the Methodist Church Cookie Walk in Marshfield on Sat. Dec. 6.

Rachel Ley was Clara in the CWSO performance of the *Nutcracker* Dec. 6 and 7. **Peter Krueger, Maddie DeBot** played in the orchestra.

Faculty News

Mark Sunday, Feb. 15 at 2:00 p.m. on your calendar. That is when a recital will be presented by **Pat D'Ercole** in honor of what would have been Miss Aber's (ASTEC's founder and first director) 90th birthday. In fact, it will be played on her David Tecchler violin. Pat will be assisted by **Ann Marie Novak**, piano, **Kyoko Fuller**, violin and **Lawrence Leviton**, cello.

Dee Martz, current secretary of the Board of Directors of the Suzuki Association of the Americas, attended the SAA Board meeting in Hartford, CT January 9-11.

December, 2003 Graduates

Alan Kiepert, Violin Book 1
Alex Buehler, Violin Book 2
Katherine Munck, Viola Book 7
Lucas Chan, Violin Book 3
Philip Smyth, Violin Book 6
Ami Yamamoto, Violin Book 9
Keisuke Yamamoto, Violin Book 7
Emily Hope, Cello Book 2
Peter O'Reilly, Cello Book 5
Mary Banovetz, Piano Book 3
Anna Czernicki, Piano Book 2
Ann Tillotson, Piano Book 1
Julida Kochanowski, Piano Book 2
Chris Droske, Viola Book 4

January, 2004 Graduates

Mary Banovetz, Piano Book 3
Isaac Klasinski, Piano Book 1
Kamen Klasinski, Violin Book 3
Marcia Marchel, Violin Book 5
Teresita Marchel, Violin Book 2
Will Mitchell, Cello Book 2
Chloe Mobley, Violin Twinkles

Christopher Patchett, Violin Book 8
Antony Van Tiem, Violin Twinkles
Annie Yao, Violin Twinkles

Upcoming Events

Community Performance Opportunity!

For Violin and Cello Students in Books 1-4

Tired of performing for the same people? Are your stuffed animals' blank stares just not doing it for you? Well, we have just the thing for you. Suzuki graduate students Heidi Corcoran and Emily Watson are organizing and leading a violin and cello performance that will take place after school (meet at 3:30) on February 27th at either Portage County Nursing Home or Riverside Suites Assisted Living Facility. We will have one rehearsal at the February 21st marathon in the Collins Classroom Center (CCC) following cookie break, and another short rehearsal the day of the performance at the location we decide upon. Benefits include: a chance to play your pieces for people you may not know, a chance to perform with your friends, a chance to learn pieces you already know on a different string (ooh, tricky), a chance to learn some cool harmony parts for pieces you know really well, and most of all, this is a chance to make your audience's day just a little bit brighter. There will be fliers up designating where we will meet for the first rehearsal on February 21.

Pieces we hope to play:

Together:

Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star and Variations, Lightly Row, Song of the Wind, May Song, Allegro, Minuet I, Musette, Hunter's Chorus, Minuet in G, Mystery Piece

Violins Alone:

Waltz, Martini Gavotte, Humoresque, Seitz Concerto #5, 1st movement

Cellos Alone:

French Folk Song, Berceuse, Chorus from "Judas Maccabeus."

Saturday, February 14th, CSCO meets 9:00 – 11:00 am in Room A202 in the Fine Arts building.

Saturday, February 21st, CSCO meets 9:00 – 10:15 am in Room A202 in the Fine Arts building.

Saturday, February 21st, Marathon Saturday

Sunday, February 22nd, Solo Recitals, 2:00 and 3:30 pm, Michelsen Hall

Saturday, March 13th, Marathon Saturday

Sunday, March 14th, Solo Recitals, 2:00 and 3:30 pm, Michelsen Hall

Marathon Schedules & Locations

February 21

CSCO - A201 (9:00 – 10:15)

Pianos* (11:00 – 2:00)

Violins - CCC114** (9:00 – 12:00)

Cellos - A202 (9:00 – 10:30) A201 (10:30 – 12:00)

Violas - Suzuki House-Room 110 (9:00 – 12:00)

Voice - Suzuki House-Room 107 (9:00 – 10:30)

March 13

CSCO - A201 (9:00 – 10:15)

Pianos* (11:00 – 2:00)

Violins - Michelsen (9:00 – 12:00)

Cellos - A202 (9:00 – 12:00)

Violas - Suzuki House-Room 110 (9:00 – 12:00)

Voice - Suzuki House-Room 107 (9:00 – 10:30)

April 3 (Piano only) *

A204 (11:00 – 2:00)

A202 (11:00 – 2:00)

April 24

CSCO - A201 (9:00 – 10:15)

Violins - Michelsen (9:00 – 12:00)

Cellos - A202 (9:00 – 12:00)

Violas - A205 (9:00 – 12:00)

Voice - A206 (9:00 – 10:30)

* Piano students - please check with your teacher for your specific time and classroom assignment.

** CCC114 is located in the Collins Classroom Center (College of Letters & Science) which is at the north end of the same parking lot used by the College of Fine Arts (Lot E)