

AMBASSADOR

Aber Suzuki Center

University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point
College of Fine Arts and Communication
inspire, create, achieve

March 2008

From the Director's Desk

By Dee Martz

I discovered the following on the Suzuki Association of Australia Webpage. I hope that you find it as helpful as I do. DM.

LISTENING – THE VITAL INGREDIENT

A Suzuki teacher I know often says that 'Suzuki' is like a recipe. Just like a cake does, 'Suzuki' needs all of the ingredients included if it is to be a success! That is a good analogy. Dr Suzuki encouraged us to create a nurturing environment which would guarantee the success of every student. He agreed that some students adapt more quickly than others within this environment, but the outcome for each can be success.

Just like our cake recipe's list of ingredients, the ingredients of a positive Suzuki experience are clearly set out. Here are some of them: An early beginning, good listening habits, parent involvement, a well-qualified teacher who has good rapport with the parent and student, a good quality instrument, lots of praise, consistent practice, performing for others.

However, there is one which works as 'magically' as does baking powder in our cake recipe so I am going to single it out. It is: Listening to the recordings!

"Do you want to learn quickly or slowly?" The answer is usually "quickly"! Then, I say to them, listen lots! Unfortunately students are not aware of the amazing benefits of listening, even although they can sing TV commercials, and songs they hear frequently without really knowing how they do. (Ah, but we know!) So even when the students are perfectly capable of pressing that start button themselves, doing so continues to be the parent's responsibility. Perhaps by the time they are 15 or 16 they will do it for themselves! So, why not play

those Suzuki recordings and enjoy them. The music is beautiful. Do not limit your listening to the current book, but enjoy the beautiful music that awaits you.

Remember---Dr. Suzuki said "Listening until we remember is not enough. We must listen until we cannot forget."



Brownie the Wonder Snail

By Tom Yang

My older daughter Olivia and I went on an outing where the agenda was ice cream and fries followed by a visit to a pet store. Much to our delight, the pet store had stocked some aquarium snails, so we purchased one, placed it in our aquarium and after due consideration my daughter dubbed it "Brownie." Brownie is now one of the more interesting denizens of the tank. He is called a mystery snail – and though I'm not sure why snails of this type bear this name, it *is* a mystery how this snail, whose locomotion is almost imperceptible, will be at one end of the tank at a given moment and at the other end at the next glance. At first we wondered if the goldfish were moving the snail. But one night when the snail was at the front of the tank I put my finger on the glass where it was located and discovered that it covers more distance than appears to a casual observer. One mystery solved!

The surprising results that Brownie achieves through what appears to be very slow progress is a picture of how Suzuki viewed musical development. The snail does not move fast, but the snail *does* move and because of this movement, covers a distance that

seems improbable. The difference in results between no movement and a little movement can be astonishing. Movement for Brownie represents life, health and achievement. In like manner, practicing for the musician represents *musical* life, musical health and musical achievement. Hence if Brownie were a musician, he might suggest the following:

- Practice daily. I don't think that we often think of the detrimental effects of skipping practice – especially on young children. Daily practice eliminates arguments about whether practice happens. If you don't skip days and make it clear that this is an important expectation, after a while debates about practicing subside. It's when the possibility of skipping practice exists that children will work to get a "skip day." There will be days when things come up that seem to prevent the possibility of an adequate practice session. On days like these, try to get in a short session -- the difference between practicing 10 minutes and not practicing at all can be staggering. When you miss practice you not only fail to improve skills, you fail to maintain skills that have already been acquired. Touching your instrument even briefly maintains a bridge to the next practice session. Breaking contact with your instrument requires that more of the next session be utilized for remedial work. Keeping in contact with your instrument means having something to build on for tomorrow. Short practices may not seem immediately significant but they are an effective investment towards the next practice session.
- Practice consistently. We live in age of fad diets where quick results are promised for temporary disciplines. Deep down it is the hope of every dieter that by temporarily suspending bad (though pleasant) eating habits, we can achieve permanent results. Somehow we all think it to be our right to return to our old habits. By contrast, healthy eating implies a proper view of food that is *permanent*. Becoming a musician, like adopting proper eating habits, is a lifestyle change for the student and the members of his household. You never only just "pick-up" an instrument, by studying music, you change the milieu in which you live. A successful musician is not so much a person with great natural abilities, as much as he is a person who has accepted that practicing

is an every day part of life. Deeply learned skills do not come in short periods of time, they are results of long-term even lifelong investments.

- Practice to enjoy your skills. The movement of the snail is an expression of his life. Practicing is not something done only to achieve something, it is a joyous end in itself; it expresses the musical life of the musician. A musician is a *practioner of her art; hence the act practicing should become a reward of practice*. Spend time in your sessions playing old pieces and keep them strong. Let your student experience the sense of power she has by being able to reel off piece after piece. Make sure that lots of time is spent working on pieces that the student already plays well. Remember musicians who practice more, do play well, but the converse is also true, those who play well practice more because it is fun to do so.

One of the questions I have pondered since Brownie moved into our aquarium is why my family has been so taken by this slow-moving snail. The goldfish are brighter and move far more quickly and can swim perhaps 200 times faster than Brownie can glide. Yet the first question asked when we look at the tank is: "Where's Brownie?"

I think that one of the answers to the mystery of Brownie's appeal lies in the context in which he makes progress. For the goldfish, our tank is basically a living room, getting from one side to another does not require sustained effort – there really isn't progress to chart, there is no sense of accomplishment. For Brownie, circumnavigating the walls of our aquarium is almost a half marathon – there is a sense of progress that builds little by little. Put it another way, the context of Brownie's world makes his movements meaningful, the context of the goldfishes' world makes their movements appear almost random. In this case, the goldfishes' ability to move fast is not as interesting as Brownie's ability to move slowly. Clearly the definition of value does not lie wholly in ability.

The fact is our skills and gifts do not exist in a vacuum. They are meant to be exercised within the context of our existence. I've been privileged to have played with many different musicians. I have derived much enjoyment from these collaborations, but no

accompanying experience has captured my interest (or my heart) as completely as playing the Twinkle Variations with my 4-year old daughter (a cellist) and hearing her burst into song as we played the final theme. The context I have with my daughter makes the experience richer.

All parents have this context. It is the context of the love they have for their children. In the Suzuki world, the purpose of musical study is to enable children to freely exercise their growing ability within the context of love and to find joy and meaning in doing so. Perhaps nothing echoes joy in the heart of a parent as much as observing the delight children find in the exercise of their abilities within the safety of a loving environment.

There are two prongs to Brownie's lessons: to give our children the tools of discipline and perseverance and to provide a loving milieu in which to exercise the fruits of this discipline. That and making my date with my daughter a memorable one makes him a bargain at \$1.39 plus tax.



Voila Viola

By Dee Martz

Suzuki Viola School Volume 4 contains two complete concertos by Telemann. These pieces are the first pieces in the Suzuki books that were actually composed for the viola. They are also the first pieces that are part of the standard viola repertoire and therefore the first pieces we play that have been recorded by a number of well known violists world wide.

Georg Philipp Telemann, composer of the first known concerto for viola, was born in 1681 Magdeburg, Germany. His ancestors were upper middle class and university educated. His father, maternal grandfather and brother were all Lutheran clergymen. It is likely that he too would have followed in their footsteps except for his exceptional musical ability. By the age of 10 he mastered the violin, flute, zither and keyboard and by age 12 had composed an opera. Unfortunately, his family disapproved of music and did not support his interest. Telemann was not about to let their resistance keep him from continuing his music education so he taught himself by studying scores and transcribing the

work of other composers including Corelli. In 1701 when he was sent off to the University of Leipzig to study law he stopped off in Halle along the way so that he could meet the young Handel.

It was while Telemann was a student at Leipzig University that a career in music became inevitable. Within a year of his arrival he founded the student *Collegium Musicum* with which he gave public concerts. Interestingly J.S. Bach would later become the conductor of this group. In his long career Telemann wrote at least 3000 works in a style that extends from the late Baroque into the age of Haydn. His compositions include 46 settings of the Passion and 1043 cantatas, oratorios, Masses, motets and psalms. He wrote operas, overtures, suites, nearly 50 concertos and lots of chamber music. Throughout his life, he continued to involve himself in public performances and was also commercially active in publishing and selling much of the music that he wrote.

Fortunately for Telemann he had a wonderful sense of humor and a genuinely likeable personality. With these traits he was admired rather than resented for his meteoric rise to power and wealth. Although contemporary with Bach and Handel he was the most famous composer in Germany. An incredible level of self-confidence gave him the courage to frequently perform and publish works even when his superiors interfered with his plans. In 1721 Telemann moved to Hamburg and became Director of music for the five principal churches of that city. He remained in Hamburg until his death in 1767, when he was succeeded by his godson, Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, son of Johann Sebastian.



Results From the Practice-a-Thon

The ASC faculty is pleased to announce the results of the January Practice-a-thon. By collecting pledges and contributions for the 38, 065 minutes of reported practice the students raised \$2930.28. The money will help sponsor the Latin American Suzuki Ensemble's performance at the 13th Suzuki Association of the Americas Conference in Minneapolis. Students from all over Latin America were selected by audition for membership in this ensemble which will perform Suzuki

repertoire as well as music from their own cultures as they participate in the conference events. A big **THANK YOU** For all your efforts!

Prizes were given to the four Aber Suzuki Center students who raised the most money and to the studio with the highest percentage participation. First prize went to **Sarah Harmon** (\$309.15) with second prize going to **Alyssa Schroeckenthaler** (\$290.60) and third prize to **Wade Dittburner** (\$200). The students in Professor Pat's studio had the highest percentage participation rate with 60% involvement. Congratulations to all!

As you are thanking your sponsors, remind them that these are tax deductible contributions.



Parent Education Sessions

Please join the March session "Do You Hear What I Hear (Listening)" on **Tuesday, March 11, at 7:30 pm, NFAC 144.**

Future sessions are as follows:

April 8 - "Fostering Independent Learning"
May 13 - "In the Good Old Summertime: Survival of Those Lazy Days of Summer"

We look forward to seeing you there!!!



Festival Concert Review Pieces

The 2008 Aber Suzuki Center Festival Concert will be held at 2:00 p.m. on April 27 at Ben Franklin Junior High School. The reception following the concert will give everyone involved the opportunity to marvel at the musical accomplishments and to honor the graduating seniors.

Please use the following list to focus your preparation for this recital. Individual preparation really does determine the overall quality of the group performances. This is a wonderful opportunity to follow

Dr. Suzuki's advice "Raise your ability on a piece that you can play."

Plan to bring your family and friends to this fabulous musical celebration.

Violin

Eccles Sonata, Grave (Book 8)
Vivaldi Concerto in A, Allegro (Book 4)
Gavotte in g minor (Book 3)
Waltz (Book 2)
Happy Farmer (Book 1)
Andantino (Book 1)
Go Tell Aunt Rhody (Book 1)

Viola

Telemann: Concerto for 2 violas 4th movement 1'40"
Minuet #3 Book 3 J. S. Bach 2'45"
Two Grenadiers Robert Schumann 1'38"
Tango to Trinidad Joanne Martin 43"

Cello

Twinkle Variation A (Book 1)
Song of the Wind (Book 1)
Hunter's Chorus (Book 2)
Scherzo (Book 3)
Danse Rustique (Book 5)



Gretchen Sands Presents Senior Recital

Gretchen Sands presented her Senior Recital on Saturday, February 23 at 3:00 p.m. in the Lecture Hall, Room 221 in the Noel Fine Arts Center. She celebrated her Book 10 Graduation playing the Mozart *Concerto in D Major*. Other pieces in the program included Bach *Partita No. 2*, *March Miniature* by Kreisler, and *Meditation from Thais* by Massenet. Gretchen was joined by her sister, Emma, and brother, Erik, to perform a trio by Michael McLean, "Seranata." Gretchen was accompanied by pianist, Wanda Eikenbary.

Gretchen began her violin studies at age 3 ½ with Melissa Trudeau for one year. Since then she has studied with Kyoko Fuller. Gretchen has performed with CSCO, the Waupaca Community Orchestra, and in the Waupaca High School pit orchestra. She has also performed many violin and vocal events at the state

level Solo and Ensemble. This past fall she played the part of the Fiddler in Waupaca High School's production of *Fiddler on the Roof*. Gretchen also loves to sing and is a member of the Concert Choir and Madrigal/Vocal Jazz at Waupaca High School.

Gretchen plans to attend Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota to study music.



Katie Leifheit to Present Senior Recital

Kathryn Margaret Leifheit of Marshfield Senior High School, voice student of Mrs. Mary Hofer and piano student of Mrs. Judy Meyer will perform in a Senior Suzuki Voice and Piano Recital Sunday, March 30 at 2 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church located at 200 South Lincoln Avenue, Marshfield. Kate will be accompanied on piano by Ann Marie Novak.

Kate is an excellent student, earning many honors during her high school career. She is a National Merit Commended Scholar, the 2007 National English Teacher's Award Winner for Creative Writing, earned National AP Scholar as a junior, and is co-valedictorian of her class at MHS. She has been involved in many extra-curricular activities. She has served as a Marshfield Sister Cities delegate to Argentina, distinguished herself as one of the highest point earners on the Science Olympiad Team she Co-Captains, qualified for national competition as a sophomore and as a junior for the Health Occupation Students of America team that she serves as President, and co-founded the Green Team. Kate volunteers outside the classroom with many local organizations. She has volunteered over 350 hours in the community; serving as a Volunteer in the emergency Room at St. Joseph's Hospital, serving as the student liaison on the Board of Directors of Marshfield Habitat for Humanity. In addition she served over 75 hours volunteering with community groups for National Honor Society. She works with 6th grade students for the past two years, tutoring them in math. Kate plans to attend a four year University, possibly double majoring in genetics and Spanish.

All are welcome to attend Kate's recital. Refreshments will follow.

Student News

The "Earth Quartet" performed for three classes of students at Westfield Elementary School Friday, February 15th. **Wade Dittburner, Erik Sands, Teddy Schenkman, and Emily Clay** performed works by Mozart, Bartok, and Stone. Each member of the quartet demonstrated their instrument's contribution to the string family. The Westfield students were quite amazed by what they heard and all wanted to know at what age the Earth Quartet members had started to play. Thanks to Emily Clay for organizing this event at what was her former Elementary School.

Congratulations to **Sam Sheibley** for playing his home Minuet recital on February 24th!

Richard Meilahn graduated from Violin Book 1 in December. His name was inadvertently omitted from the January Ambassador.

WSMA Participants: **Alan Kiepert, Emily Spaid, Mac DeBot, Kelley Rolak, Stacey Rolak, Jonathan Cochrane, Maria Marchel, Petrea Schedgick.**

The Central Wisconsin Honors Orchestra performed in concert on Feb. 14 in Michelsen Hall under the direction of Dr. Patrick Miles. Members are recommended by their high school orchestra directors. ASC members who were selected were: **Kelley Rolak, Maria Marchel, Petrea Schedgick, Michael Crump and Sam Schenkman.**



Faculty News

Pat D'Ercole attended SAA Teacher Development meeting in Boulder, CO Feb. 22-25.



Upcoming Events

Tuesday, March 11, 2008

Parent Education Session, "Do You Hear What I Hear?" (Listening), 7:30 pm, NFAC 144

Saturday, March 29, 2008

Marathon, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Saturday, March 29, 2008

Solo Recitals – 2:00 and 3:30 pm, Michelsen Hall

Tuesday, April 8, 2008

Parent Education Session, "Fostering Independent Learning", 7:30 pm, NFAC 144

Saturday, April 12, 2008

Piano Marathon, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Sunday, April 13, 2008

Solo Recitals – 2:00 and 3:30 pm, Michelsen Hall

Saturday, April 26, 2008

Marathon (except Piano), 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Sunday, April 27, 2008

String & Voice Festival Concert
2:00 pm, Ben Franklin Junior High School Auditorium

Saturday, May 10, 2008

Solo & Ensemble Concert – 2:00 and 3:30 pm,
Michelsen Hall

Saturday, May 10, 2008

CSCO Concert, 7:30 pm, Michelsen Hall

Sunday, May 11, 2008

Piano Festival Concert, 2:00 and 3:30 pm,
Michelsen Hall

Tuesday, May 13, 2008

Parent Education Session, "In The Good Old
Summertime: Survival of Those Lazy Days of Summer",
7:30 pm, NFAC 144

