

AMBASSADOR

Aber Suzuki Center

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

May 2009

From the Director's Desk

By Dee Martz

Well, it is Monday morning April 27 and I am basking in the glow of yesterday's Festival Concert. Congratulations on extraordinarily musical performances. The phrasing and ensemble were good, and the sound was fabulous. Aber Suzuki Center students really prepared well and stayed focused during the performance.

And then—there was the sneaky stuff. All I can say is thank you from the bottom of my heart. I hope that you all realize that part of me will always be with the ASC faculty, staff, students and families.

I am so eager to see what happens next at ASC. I am certain that no one is more curious than I to find out who is fortunate enough to be named Director. This is a wonderfully supportive place to work and live. I also feel very confident that no matter who fills my chair the UWSP Suzuki programs will continue to make a big mark on central Wisconsin, the Americas and beyond.

I don't know how I am going to sit in eight seats in Michelsen but I certainly am going to try. Thank you all for your generous donations to the COFAC Scholarship fund. The Suzuki area will be receiving an equal share of the money generated by this fund so your gifts will make a difference, even in the Suzuki wing.

Thank you for the tremendous support I received during my tenure as Director. I couldn't have done this job without the constant help and guidance from all of you. I hope to see many of you at the Institute this summer and again at Music of the Masters on November 7.



An Interview with Dee Martz

By Tim Mutschlecner

As my thoughts revolved around what to write for this month's Ambassador (yet another article on how to get your child to practice?) I had a flash of inspiration: an interview with Dee! As most of you know Dee has announced her retirement following the American Suzuki Institute this summer. Dee graciously agreed to reflect on her twenty three years as director of the Aber Suzuki Center. Her candid and heartfelt responses give us a glimpse into what a ride it has been.

What was your introduction to the world of Suzuki teaching? How did you become a part of the method? I first heard about Suzuki in 1965 when I was a student at Indiana University. There were several Japanese violinists who had been Suzuki students in Matsumoto. These students did not excel when compared to the group of highly skilled violinists in the IU Music School so my first impression was not very favorable. The next encounter I had with the world of Suzuki teaching was in 1978 when we moved to Stevens Point and I met Margery Aber. Within a few weeks two of our children were enrolled in the program (the third was just one year old at the time.) Although all my professional activities were within the UWSP Music Department, I gradually got wrapped into the Suzuki teaching world because of the many interactions that I had with excellent Suzuki teachers from all over the world. These began in the summer of 1979 while I was teaching chamber music at the American Suzuki Institute and continue to this day.

When you look back over the twenty three years as director of the Aber Suzuki Center and the American Suzuki Institute what accomplishments are you most proud of? I am most proud of the quality of the faculty and their commitment to the Suzuki philosophy. I am especially proud of how that is demonstrated through the way they interact as people, as musicians and as teachers. They

create such a wonderful environment for learning and for growing.

What do you know now that you wish you knew when you began? I wish I knew better how to balance listening and talking. I wish I knew how to decide when it is appropriate to just make a decision and when to work for consensus as the entire faculty makes the decision. I wish I was less risk averse and, as a result, more open to trying new ideas.

You have experienced the “parent” angle of the Suzuki Triangle. What was that like? I must say that this is a loaded question! Being on the parent side of the triangle is certainly much more demanding than being on the teacher side. I found it extremely challenging to stay positive and to recognize small accomplishments. Fortunately my husband was much better at both of those things. As far as the environment was concerned I know for sure that the house was always filled with music, both recorded and live, as my husband and I are both musicians. We took our children to many, many concerts—perhaps too many as one son learned that Michelsen Hall is a wonderful place for naps and he slept through almost every concert he attended there. We did listen to the Suzuki recordings and we did practice but I must confess that we did not manage to do so every day. I found it really difficult to balance all the responsibilities and priorities one has as a parent. Frankly, music was only sometimes the first priority for any of our children, but it was always there. I am happy to say that for all three of our children music is a really important part of who they have become. Our daughter Alyssa, who studied piano, teaches general music in the Spring Green school district. She has a keen insight into the performance qualities of the music she hears and is sharing her deep love of music with hundreds of children every week. Our son Paul, who studied cello, works for the Democratic Caucus of the Pennsylvania State Assembly. He is fascinated by music from all different genres and from all over the world. Our son Daniel, who also studied the cello, and now is a Navy Nuke (submariner/officer/engineer), plays the guitar, composes music and just told me a few days ago that his cello is calling for more attention.

One of my favorite stories demonstrates how much music may be a part of someone who doesn't go very far in their Suzuki studies and even stops lessons before high school. This is just what Paul did, and for years I questioned whether his Suzuki cello experience had any lasting impact on him. I got the answer in a surprising way. One December my husband drove to Madison to bring Paul back to Stevens Point after his last final exam for the semester. Paul had clearly been up all night studying and fell asleep almost immediately after he fastened his seatbelt. My husband loves listening to public radio and was doing so while driving home. The magic moment happened when the Mozart *Requiem* came on. Paul, who was apparently dead to the

world, sat bolt upright and said, “Mozart, what a dude!” and immediately collapsed back into sound sleep.

What was your worst Institute experience? During one of the first Institutes I directed a parent came into my office and closed the door. He introduced himself, told me that he was a professional orchestra conductor and said based on that he knew I would believe him when he said he understood that there are political realities in every job. He then told me that his son was in Miss So-and-So's class, and he described in detail how the class was going. Frankly I had heard from others about Miss So-and-So's teaching style so, even though I was appalled, I wasn't shocked. The parent then said “If you tell me that Miss So-and-So is on the faculty for political reasons I will understand and accept that as the explanation for her presence at such a fine Institute. However, I am sure that you will understand why I won't be taking my 6 year old back to her class.” As I write this it sounds as if this father was acting like a snooty know-it-all, but he wasn't. It was a quiet conversation. I knew that he just wanted some information and he had come up with the only explanation that made any sense to him. I was ashamed to say that Miss So-and-So did have a very important position in the Suzuki world, and perhaps that was why she had been on the Institute faculty for many, many years. I then apologized for the experience his son was having in the classroom and promised him, and myself, that things would change. It took quite a number of years but the Institute faculty was gradually transformed so that the teaching was more reflective of my understanding of Dr. Suzuki's philosophy.

Tell us about your experience riding a moped. I have been included in many ASI Talent Show acts—quite a few against my better judgment! The teen dorm counselors got this “wonderful” idea for a talent show skit. It involved having me and Barbara Ziebell (who was the Suzuki program assistant at that time) dress up and fix our hair like teen dorm kids. The plan was for us to get everyone's attention by riding mopeds into Quandt, from the back doors all the way to the edge of the stage. According to the skit we were in a hurry because we were going to be late for bed check in the teen dorm. In order for the skit to go as planned I had to learn how to ride a moped. As luck would have it someone informed the Institute photographer so there is a picture of my attempt to do so. Even with expert instruction and careful practice it was soon apparent that the skit had to be rewritten for the safety of all those in attendance at the Talent Show. Barbara and I pushed the moped into Quandt while yelling at each other, disagreeing about whose fault it was that we were so late. The only other moped experience I had was in Australia where staying on the right side of the street (left side actually) took so much concentration that I could barely figure how to deal with the roundabouts and laughed hysterically during the whole experience. Oops. My husband just told me that I was actually riding a motorbike then.

Some of us don't know the "earthquake in Peru" story. What happened? The earthquake struck on October 3, 1974. Depending on what source one reads it measured somewhere between 7.2 and 8.1 on the Richter scale. This *terremoto* lasted for the longest 2 minutes and 15 seconds I have ever experienced.

The day started like many others. We got up, fed the children and took the bus down to the center of Lima for our daily orchestra rehearsal. Maestro La Rosa was guiding us through the preparation for the upcoming concert when the noise began and the earth started shaking. Soon the lights went out and Maestro La Rosa yelled "Calma" and disappeared. We were sitting on the stage of the Teatro Municipal right below the fly space which was open for about four stories—all the way up to the roof. The walls and ceiling were made of quincha adobe (a series of wooden frames filled with crushed cane, covered with mud and plastered) and with all the shaking big hunks starting falling to the stage. We all stood up and headed to the exit so that there would be clear sky above our heads. Unfortunately the garua (cool mist) was in full swing so the garage type door was pulled down and the only exit was a regular room sized door that was only about 4 feet tall. Everyone in the orchestra was leaning forward and pressing toward this one small exit. There was real danger of the crowd trampling over each other to get out quickly. I still find it difficult to believe what happened next. It was as if everyone, at the same time, stood up straight, took a deep breath and we all got out of the theater into the relative safety of the outdoors. Once outside we stood in the driveway/loading area, between two white adobe walls three stories high. As the ground swayed they moved almost like sheets that had been hung out to dry on a breezy day. Finally the noise and the motion stopped. We took a cautious look at the main thoroughfare that was at the front of the theater and noticed that the stoplights that had been hanging above the middle of the road were now on the street, surrounded by rubble and blocking the way. The gargoyles, planters and windowsills that adorned the old Spanish style buildings had also fallen. We were very lucky that so few members of the orchestra had been hit by falling rubble while inside the theater or outside on the walk.

It took quite a few hours to make it back to our home in the suburb of Miraflores, a few miles from the center of Lima. Fortunately our children and housekeeper Armandina were safe and there was little damage to our apartment. This was not the case in other areas of the city, as many thousands were killed and at least 25,000 people were left homeless. The Theater was not safe, and even if it had been the government ruled that no indoor gatherings of more than ten people were permitted during this time, not even in the churches, due to the likelihood of general panic during the aftershocks.

We had survived a major earthquake, but that was just the beginning of the saga as there were more than 1,000 aftershocks that were strong enough to be felt. At night, when we were laying quietly in bed, we could hear the tremors approaching, getting louder and louder as the waves of seismic activity got closer to the ground under us. What we couldn't tell from the sound was just how the tremors would grip the building or how long the shaking would last. Almost exactly a month to the day after the big quake there was huge aftershock, 6.9 on the Richter scale and one minute, forty-five seconds in length. Talk about adrenaline rushes! We moved back to the states a few weeks after that but to this day a low rumbling thunder starts my heart racing. The earthquakes were terrifying but the kindness and generosity we experienced during this trying time was even more overwhelming.

Tell us about your most memorable student. It is my impression that I tend to live in the present and draw from the past. As a result when I think of how to answer this question I smile from the inside out as I remember something that happened just this week. The younger sister of one of my pre-twinkle students wanted to have a lesson. She stood (a notable act for this particular child) on the foot chart and took a beautiful bow. I will never forget her smile as her precious face came back into view. The joy of helping someone learn is why I love teaching.

What would be the first thing you would tell your successor? Respect our history but don't be tied to it. Believe in yourself and trust your instincts. Value the faculty. You can depend on them to help you be the best you can be. OK—I know that is more than one thing but it has been twenty three years of on the job training for me.

If you could travel in time to the year 2059 what would the Aber Suzuki Center look like? What kind of changes might you see? I do not have magic vision but I have a couple of ideas. I would like to see many more group activities, including some for people from all generations. I would like to see a curriculum that includes music history, music theory and improvisation. I would like to see that behind the studio door, the student-parent-teacher triangle is still at work with a goal of developing excellence in music and in character. Mostly I would like to see that the Aber Suzuki Center is in a world where participating in music is a core part of everyday experience.

Many former students of ASC have continued on in music at various levels. What do you think is the most important reason for offering children the gift of music? Many speak of all the side benefits of being involved in music, from the way it can change brain development to the way it enhances academic learning and self discipline. I believe all these things, but I really believe in music for music's sake. Music speaks to the soul. It can connect people from all over the world because, even if we

do not share the same life experiences, we share the same basic emotions. I am entranced by the sound of the viola and captivated by the genius of Mozart. It is for these reasons that I am grateful to my parents for giving me the gift of music. Of course I wish the same gift for all children.

Would you like to add any other observations from your long tenure as Director? I have always felt inadequate for the role of Director. This makes me even more grateful to the ASC and ASI faculty and staff for all the years of creative and supportive team work.

What are your plans after retirement? Will we still see you around? I plan to let my retirement unfold gradually and to become what it becomes. No doubt I will see many of you around town and elsewhere as I plan to attend the Music of the Masters and other major Suzuki events during the year. I will continue playing in the Central Wisconsin Symphony and have some plans for chamber music performances next year. I feel a great pull to spend more time with family and believe that this will be more possible in retirement. Beyond those few ideas I am just going to let this new phase of life gradually reveal itself.



Voila Viola

By Dee Martz

It is the sound of the viola that attracts my ear and my heart each and every day. Sometimes people describe the viola's sound as "dark", "earthy", or "mellow" and perhaps it is these qualities that I like so much. However, I wonder if I was immediately attracted to the sound of the viola because I grew up listening to my dad play the tenor saxophone or perhaps because both my father and Uncle Ralph were wonderful tenors who often sang solos at church. I wonder if I love the sound of the viola because the range is about the same as the human voice. I wonder if I love the sound of the viola because the very first time I heard a string instrument "up close and personal" it was Elizabeth Lichtey playing the viola so well. I wonder if I love the sound of the viola because I love to be in the middle of things and that is just where the viola is placed in orchestra and just where the viola line is often placed in music. I wonder, I wonder, I wonder—because it is my nature to wonder, but there is one thing that I know for sure, it is the sound of the viola that I love. I hope that you do too.



ASC Parent Education Sessions

All Aber Suzuki Center parents are encouraged to attend the Parent Education Sessions which are offered to you free of charge! Join the May session, "In the Good Old Summertime: Survival of Those Lazy Days of Summer" on Tuesday, May 12, at 7:30 pm in NFAC Room 144.

We look forward to seeing you there!!!



Aber Children's Scholarships Awarded

The American Suzuki Foundation Board selected seven families to receive the Aber Children's Scholarship for 2008-2009. Decisions were based on careful consideration of essays submitted by parents and students, teacher evaluations, and teacher comments. This scholarship was created by Margery Aber to recognize students and their families who exemplify the Suzuki philosophy. Award recipients represented all instrumental programs offered within the Aber Suzuki Center from which applications were received.

The Foundation is pleased to make the awards to the following families and students:

The Harmon Family, Sarah Harmon, Violin
The Felt Family, Craig and Tom Felt, Violin
The Kurzynski Family, Marco Kurzynski, Violin and Piano
The McIntee Family, Emily McIntee, Voice
The Yang Family, Olivia Yang, Cello
The Josephson Family, Michael and Laura Josephson, Violin and Piano
The Bauman Family, Weeden Bauman, Violin

Congratulations! We also thank all the families who took the time and effort to apply for this scholarship. There were many wonderful applications, and the decisions were difficult to make. We applaud the accomplishment and commitment of every family and student, and we encourage all Aber Suzuki Center families to apply next year!



Family Gift Presentation to Dee Martz

In case you were unable to attend the Festival Concert on Sunday, April 26th, we would like to share with you the beautiful words Dr. Loren Rolak spoke to Dee as he presented her with the family gift on behalf of all of the families of the Aber Suzuki Center.

"As you know, the Suzuki method emphasizes the family and we, the Suzuki Parents, have the honor of presenting Dee a gift on this special occasion.

As parents, we want to give our children the gift of music because we know it will enrich their lives forever. But no matter how much money we make, or how much we love them, most of us cannot teach our children music or give them that gift of music in that way. The only way we can teach them music is to find a music teacher. And wow, we found a great one in Dee!

Dee is not only a great teacher herself, but under her leadership, she has assembled and guided a whole team of superb teachers at the Aber Suzuki Center. We have often wondered what this talented faculty could accomplish if they didn't have to spend their time teaching our...challenging children. But we think they know that giving children the gift of music is accomplishment enough.

So, Dee, you are born, you grow up, you go to work and then the time comes when you decide to move on. We are so grateful for the time you spent with us and our children. So when you look back on your work, please realize that in our little corner here, you really did change the world. And, we thank you, Dee.

In recognition of your accomplishments the Suzuki Parents collected funds for the College of Fine Arts and Communication's "Name Your Seat" campaign. The response was overwhelming and we have dedicated not 1 but 8 seats in your name!

Congratulations, Dee!"



Student News

Emily Spaid, Stacey Rolak, Petrea Schedgick, Bryce Marion, Jonathan Cochrane, Erik Sands, Emma Sands, Annie Yao, Michael Josephson, Joanna Sakamaki and Laura Josephson played at the State Solo and Ensemble Festival held on May 2.

Many thanks to the following students and their parents:

Jake Kubisiak, Michael Josephson, Laura Josephson, Annie Yao, Rachel Reichert, Sarah Harmon, Joanna Sakamaki, Cal Irons, Alyssa Schroeckenthaler, Hope Mahon, Havilah Vang, Katherine Young, Eleanor Mutschlecner, Marco Kurzynski, Elijah Vang, Ada Sell, Gerald Sakamaki, Peter O'Reilly, Emily Clay, and Emily Karbowski who represented the Aber Suzuki Center as they performed March 29th for the University Open House.

Olivia Yang, Nathaniel Taylor, Tom Felt, Hope Mahon, Kate Young, Sarah Harmon, Cal Irons, Craig Felt, Roshini Traynor, Laura Josephson, Michael Josephson, Annie Yao, Erik Sands, Emma Sands, Olivia Heese, Julia Zinda, Gabriel Heese, Madison Tepp, Anjali Iyengar, Natalie Leek, Timothy Hofer, Sam Ginnett, Victoria Tillotson, Lauren Lila, Ashley Hoerter and Katie Hoerter performed during the intermissions of the Central Wisconsin Symphony Orchestra's April 18 and 19 concerts.

Jon Peck, Lucas Chan, Christina Marchel, Havilah Vang, Elijah Vang, Cal Irons who played for the Red Cross Volunteer Dinner Tuesday, April 28. Special thanks to Jenna O'Connor for leading the group.

Christina Marchel, Dinesh Traynor, Roshini Traynor, Ada Sell, Hope Mahon, Alyssa Eiden, Brynn Beversdorf, Gwynn Beversdorf, Rachel Reichert for playing at the Portage County Cultural Fair on Saturday, May 2.

Rachel Ley received a Youth Service to America Disney Minnie Grant to fund a project she created called "Literacy for Little Ones". She will use the grant to donate one book to every baby born at St. Michael's Hospital. Rachel's project made the front page of the Stevens Point Journal and the Newsline 9 10:00 news.

Elissa Prebble and Michael Josephson, members of the Ocean Science Team from Marshfield High School, represented Wisconsin in Washington, DC at the National Quiz Competition, and came home with the top prize over all the other state teams!

Congratulations to **Michael Treder and Anjali Iyengar** for their recent performance in the UWSP Opera Workshop production.

Hillary Anderson's senior recital has been rescheduled for Sunday, May 17th at 4:00 pm. Hillary, a senior at Wisconsin Rapids Lincoln High School is a member of the swim team, and plans to pursue a degree in Graphic Arts at UWSP. Hillary's recital will include works from Bach to Broadway. A reception will follow the recital and all are invited.

Congratulations to **Kelly and Annie Tillotson** for being awarded performer of the day at the Solo Ensemble Festival in Marshfield March 7th

Congratulations to **Michael LeGault, Annie Tillotson, Kelly Tillotson, Zara Markman, Joe Dickinson, Emily McIntee, Britt Holz, Hannah Gailbraith** for attending State WSMA

Congratulations to **Zara Markman, Anjali Iyengar, Tom Treder, Rachel Tierny, Joe Dickinson, Kelly, Tillotson, Annie Tillotson, Victoria Tillotson, Mikaela Schneider, and Britt Holz** participating in WMTA State Auditions

Teddy Schenkman auditioned for and was accepted into the 2009 Wisconsin High School Honors Orchestra on viola.

Alex Bueher got into the 2009 Wisconsin High School Honors Band on saxophone and **Lindsey Mocadlo** will also be playing with the 2009 Wisconsin High school Honors Band on trumpet.



Upcoming Events

Saturday, May 9, 2009

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

Saturday, May 9, 2009

CSCO Concert
7:30 pm, NFAC Michelsen Hall

Sunday, May 10, 2009

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

Tuesday, May 12

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

Saturday, June 13, 2009

Musical Theater Recital
6:30 pm, NFAC Michelson Hall



Have a Safe and Happy Summer!

The next edition of the Ambassador will be published October, 2009

