



AMBASSADOR

Aber Suzuki Center

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

October 2009

From the Director's Desk

By Pat D'Ercole, Interim Director

Welcome back to all the Aber Suzuki Center (ASC) families, and an especially warm welcome to the thirteen families new to ASC this year! We are privileged that you have chosen the Aber Suzuki Center to share this musical journey with you. We hope that you will find the ASC to be a learning environment filled with many Suzuki triangles of students, parents and teachers who nurture, educate and inspire each other to excellence.

There's always an excitement in the air when a new year begins—so much excitement and promise about what the future holds. This semester is no different. In these pages you will find articles about upcoming events and performances:

- The annual Music of the Masters Dinner
- ASC students providing CWSO intermission concerts
- Parent education sessions

You'll want to read about new twists on ongoing events:

- Dr. Tim's article with new insights about why we listen and its impact on your child's progress.
- Fun ideas for the marathons
- The October mini-concert provided by violinists
- "And the Survey Says..."

And last, but not least, announcements and accomplishments by ASC students, parents and teachers:

- ASC parents Andy Felt and George Kung's new book *Math Vitamins for Suzuki and non-Suzuki parents*
- Mary Pat Dean retires after 15 years as ASI Store Manager.
- New ASI Store manager needed
- Summer performances by ASC students
- Margery Aber named as Woman of American History by D.A.R.

One of the challenges any organization faces is communication with its members. Our efforts are often times further complicated by the hectic pace of life, Ambassadors or announcements that don't make it home, missed lessons, absent-minded professors, etc. This has been identified as a priority area of our strategic plan for this year. We are examining this issue and developing action steps to improve our effectiveness and would appreciate your input and suggestions. We need to hear how it works for you as ASC parents. Perhaps you know of some strategies that work for other groups to which you belong. Please feel free to stop by, call or email. I am eager to listen to your suggestions and concerns and will bring them to our faculty planning sessions.

As you can see, the title may be interim director, but the ASC will by no means be treading water for the next year. The best way to show our gratitude for the legacy we have received as a Suzuki program of international reputation is to continue to build on the solid foundation left to us by the previous ASC directors, especially most recently, Dee Martz. If you have any suggestions for how to continue to grow the vision, please stop by.



Suzuki's Great Discovery

By Tim Mutschlechner

This past Summer I spent a week in the beautiful, rolling hills of Virginia taking the *Cello Practicum* course with Dr. Beth Cantrell. In re-reading Dr. Suzuki's words, I was struck how timeless and well grounded his philosophy of nurturing the whole child was. In particular I think we cannot over emphasize what importance he placed on listening:

"The first condition for fostering your children as persons with musical sensitivity and high sensibility is to repeatedly play

the records of the teaching materials. This builds ability. If in your heart you wish to bring up your child as a person of fine musical sensitivity, please let him listen to the records and tapes every day. Without fail, he will develop fine musical sensitivity. This is a new method of education—a method of education born out of the most important ‘law of ability’ of the Suzuki method. In life before they realize it, children indiscriminately imbibe repeated outside stimuli, good or bad, and that becomes their ability. If you don’t let them listen, nothing will be fostered”.

Suzuki discussed how listening affects ease of playing: “If your child listens well to the records, ‘an inner ability’ growing inside of him, it becomes easy for him to play, and his progress becomes much faster. Ability to speak grows by daily speaking practice. Let your child repeatedly practice the pieces he can already play; emphasize the building of ability with familiar pieces. This fosters fine ability. (There is no need to rush ahead. If a child practices the pieces he knows over and over again so as to play them better and better, ability grows, and remarkable progress is made. This is the Suzuki method).”

Dr. Suzuki expressed on many occasions his single tenant of developing ability: “After one has learned a thing, it should be thoroughly mastered by repeating it again and again.” He described how this principle was carried out in the lesson:

“After a student has learned to play a piece, I tell him during the lesson, ‘Now that your preparation is complete, let’s practice in order to build your ability. The lesson is just beginning.’ I let him practice by comparing his performance with the record, or by playing along with the record. This serves to gradually foster musical rhythm, refined tonality, and beautiful posture. This is the crux of my approach to fostering fine students. Only after the student has learned the piece can the teacher begin to demonstrate his skill of fostering ability...”

Dr. Suzuki rarely claimed originality of his ideas. In fact he was convinced that fundamentally his approach to teaching violin was as old as humankind itself: The way every child learns to speak their native language.

“Create fine ability with an old piece—if this method is carried out correctly, every child will grow splendidly. I would very much like the mothers of talent education members to understand this. It is like learning the mother tongue. A small child repeats what words he can say every day. He may seem slow at first, but he quickly increases his vocabulary by the time he is five or six and starts to jabber loquaciously. In the same way, while diligently working to enrich his ability using old pieces, a student will soon begin to display fine ability to go speedily ahead. The Suzuki method is the mother tongue method. We are practicing the same method as education in the mother tongue, which never fails any child”.

Listen to what Aristotle observed in the fourth century B.C.:

We are what we repeatedly do. Therefore, excellence is not an act but a habit.

If it is only a matter of repeating the correct things why then don’t we all reach our amazing potential? Here are Dr. Suzuki’s thoughts:

“Ability is one thing we have to produce (or work for) ourselves. That means to repeat and repeat an action until it becomes a part of ourselves. It is easy to say, but to have the energy to do it—therein lies the problem. There are many people who resolve they will achieve this or that, but not all carry out their intentions. They start, perhaps, but they don’t really go on, and they don’t put enough strength into their efforts, leaving things half done. Indeed isn’t this the experience of many many people? There are only a few who go through with their purpose and accomplish things. Whatever work it may be, the way to success is, after all, to stick to one’s intentions to the very last. Everyone is able to do it; it depends only on one’s will.”

The validity of Suzuki’s teaching ideas are often confirmed by educators and researchers of today. David J. Sternbach, a psychotherapist and former professional hornist, has written about how everything we play and listen to is being mentally stored and will affect how we play.

“Repetitive practice may not necessarily improve things. Sometimes it produces the opposite—less consistency. The question is, why? Practicing passages sometimes right and sometimes wrong means mixed images are being stored in the memory banks, which interferes with developing the essential muscle memory we learn to rely on. Second, as they practice even more, there is increased risk for cumulative overuse pain and injury, and the weaker their ability to hear the music, the more repetitions needed and so on.”

Dr. Suzuki was also aware that mindless repetition was detrimental, and sometimes worse than not practicing at all. This is why he always couched his message of the need for repetition with the importance of the right musical environment -- one where hearing exemplary recordings creates clear musical imagery for the child.

Sternbach summarizes his findings:

“The message for the performer? What you hear is what you get. Have your students devote more time to sight singing and ear training. If they have imprecise mental images, they risk undermining their potential for successful performance. Reinforce how important you consider this by regularly asking them to vocalize their music for you. “

ASC Parent Education Sessions

The term used to describe the ability to hear music inside our heads is *audiation*. The only way for a teacher or parent to get a glimpse into how well a child is audiating is to have them sing the passage in question. If the 'mental recording' is fuzzy the output on the violin or cello will be uncertain. **Fuzzy goals produce fuzzy results.** Regular listening to the Suzuki recordings helps keep the mental recording a child carries around with him crystal clear and accurate!

Suzuki teacher Dr. Tanya Carey related an interesting example of how critical the 'mental recording' is to a successful performance. She was preparing to play a concerto with an orchestra and each night she would fall asleep listening to a recording of the piece. In rehearsals something strange was happening: one passage would always get messed up even though it was well prepared and practiced. One day she happened to be listening to the recording she had been absorbing while asleep and discovered that in this particular passage the recording artist was playing different notes. In other words, her subconscious mind was conflicted by two contradictory inputs; what she practiced and what she listened to did not agree!

The good news is that we can all improve our ear training through listening to the wonderful recording available through the Suzuki CDs and the amazing amount of material available on the internet. Students can Google a dozen different interpretations of a Bach Suite or Lalo's *Symphonie Espagnole*. Downloading to an MP3 allows for listening anytime, anywhere. Technologies like slowing down digital recordings for playing along were not even imagined when Dr. Suzuki first began to teach. Our greatest peril is that we have so much available and multi-task so constantly that genuine focused listening becomes a rarity. Carve out time dedicated to this kind of intentional listening and you will be greatly rewarded.

S. Suzuki, *Where Love is Deep*, pp. 42-43, 52.

S. Suzuki, *Nurtured by Love*, p. 37, 44.

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*. Bk. 2 (1103a26-1103b2) as paraphrased by Durant, W. (1967). *The Story of Philosophy*.

D. Sternbach, (June/July 2009). Ear Training Can Enhance Consistency and Reduce repetitive Overuse Injuries. *American Music Teacher*, p. 70.



All Aber Suzuki Center parents are encouraged to attend the Parent Education Sessions which are offered to you free of charge! Join the October session, **"First, You Gotta Create....Da Mood"** on Tuesday, October 13, at 7:30 pm in NFAC Room 144.

Future sessions are as follows:

"How to Get the Most from Your Lessons", November 10
"Suzuki, Translating the Philosophy into Reality", December 8
"Practicing, the Great Quest for Consistency without Boredom", February 9

"The Art of Reviewing with a Purpose", March 9
"Fostering Independent Learning" – BRING A FRIEND MEETING!, April 13

"You Decide the Topic" – details TBA, May 11

All sessions will be held at 7:30 pm in NFAC Room 144. We look forward to seeing you there!!!



ASC Students to Perform at CWSO Concerts Again This Year

This year ASC students will once again provide entertainment during the intermission of the Central Wisconsin Symphony Orchestra concerts on Saturday evenings and Sunday afternoon. In return each participant will receive two free tickets to the concert. This is a great way for ASC families to get to hear the CWSO concerts and the wonderful guest artists they bring to Stevens Point. It also gives a reason for our students to practice. After all, performing is the way we can share our gift of music and give back to the community at the same time. All instruments and voice students will be featured at some time during the year. Please watch the bulletin boards for your opportunity.

Saturday, October 10 at 7:30 pm and Sunday, October 11 at 4:00 pm at the Sentry Theatre are the first concerts of the season. Pianists will be happy to know that the guest artist is Molly Roseman, associate professor of piano in the UWSP Music Department. She will perform the *Piano Concerto #1 in G Op. 25*, by Felix Mendelssohn. Mendelssohn will host the Music of the Masters Dinner so this will be a great way to become familiar with his music.



Come to the October Marathon!

October is dress-up time. All ASC students are invited to come to the Marathon in costume!

In addition, the violin students will provide the mini-concert. Students who have prepared the Wings of Song by Mendelssohn from memory will rehearse in NFAC 290 at 9:45 am. All violinists who have reviewed Fiocco Allegro in Book 6, Hunters' Chorus in Book 2 and Twinkle Variation A are also invited to play.

Watch for more information for the November and December marathons. Coffee and donuts are planned for the parents in November, and in December we'll all wear red and green.



Invite Your Child's Cheerleaders to the Music of the Masters, November 7

The American Suzuki Foundation invites you to the **Music of the Masters**, an evening of music and merriment, to be held on November 7, 2009, at the Holiday Inn and Convention Center, 1001 Amber Street, Stevens Point. The host for the evening will be Felix Mendelssohn, as portrayed by John Knowlton. The highlight of the evening is the music! Students from every Aber Suzuki Center studio will provide music throughout the evening. The festivities begin at 6 pm with cocktails and hors d'oeuvres. Dinner will be served at 7 pm, and the entertainment will continue after the meal.

In addition, a silent auction will be held during the cocktail and dinner hours. A variety of wonderful items have been donated for the silent auction. The Music of the Masters will also include a raffle. Lee Ayers Jewelers and Thomas Dailing Designs have donated a one-of-a-kind "Cityscapes" sapphire and diamond pendant, valued at \$2,500, which will be the Grand Prize. Raffle tickets are currently on sale (one ticket for \$5, three tickets for \$10), and the drawing will be held at the end of the evening (winner need not be present). The pendant is on display at Lee Ayers Jewelers, downtown Stevens Point.

All profits from the Music of the Masters will be used for needs-based scholarships for Aber Suzuki Center students. Last year, the Foundation was able to give \$6,500 towards needs-based scholarships. Please invite your child's enthusiastic supporters to this event or to buy raffle tickets.

Tickets for the Music of the Masters and the raffle may be obtained at the Aber Center Suzuki Office, from any Aber Suzuki Center teacher, or from any American Suzuki Foundation Board member. The UWSP box office will also

have tickets for the Music of the Masters. If you need additional information, please contact Nancy Chinn at 341-7373, or Sara Oberthaler at 342-5909. Your support is greatly appreciated!



And the Survey Says....

Teachers offer many ideas each week to help Suzuki families make practice fun, schedule listening time, devise review systems, etc., but parents are a creative bunch and they know how they've tweaked those ideas to work for their children in their family routine.

A new column will begin in the November issue of the Ambassador called "And the Survey Says". This column will be an opportunity for parents to share their ideas with other parents and us teachers. On the first of each month each teacher will have a half sheet of paper with a question as to how parents put Suzuki principles into action. If you have an idea to share, please write it down. Then on the 20th of the month the suggestions will be collected and published in the next Ambassador.

The question for October (answers to appear in the November Ambassador) is: How do you motivate your child to practice? What methods do you use?

Pick up an answer sheet from your teacher, or from the bookcase in the ASC waiting room, and share your ideas by returning the answer sheet to your teacher, or drop it in the payment box in the waiting room. Then check out the November Ambassador's "And the Survey Says...." column to learn what techniques other parents have found work for them.



With Gratitude to Mary Pat Dean

After 20 years of working at the American Suzuki Institute (ASI) Store, 15 of those as a paid manager, Mary Pat Dean is retiring. Mary Pat began working at the store when her two daughters were studying viola with Mrs. Martz and she's continued long after they've graduated high school and college. The ASI Store is an important fundraising component of the Suzuki Programs at UWSP and because of its success during Mary Pat's tenure we have been able to make special equipment purchases from which we all benefit. Congratulations and heartfelt appreciation to Mary Pat for all her years of service to the program.

New ASI Store Manager Needed

If you would like to earn some extra summer income, this may be the job for you. The ASI Store Manager is responsible for purchasing merchandise, setting up and taking down the displays before the Institute begins and after it ends, scheduling workers, balancing the register daily, making deposits, balancing the change fund (start-up cash), tracking consignment, keeping an inventory, working with our t-shirt printer, assisting with the t-shirt design, and customer service.

The job involves about 6-10 hours in mid to late June to purchase merchandise, and 2-4 hours in July to schedule workers, and assist with the t-shirt design and ordering. The Wednesday or Thursday before Institute, 8-12 hours is spent setting up the store. Hours during Institute are Sunday 3-5, Monday-Friday 8am-5pm, and Saturdays 8am-11am. On the Monday after Institute, 4-6 hours is spent preparing unsold consignment for return shipping, and completing the consignment worksheets. The 2010 Institute dates are August 1-August 14.

We are looking for someone who is interested in making this their annual summer job. Interested applicants should be enthusiastic, dependable, flexible, and work well with others. If you are interested in this position or know someone who is, please submit a short resume to Pat D'Ercole by October 31th.



Taking Extra Precautions

Flu season will shortly be upon us and, if the experts are correct, avoiding the bug this year might be harder than usual. We've all heard about the ease in which the H1N1 virus seems to be able to spread. In the past, because of our strong work ethic and the difficulty of making up lessons, often both teachers and students came to lessons even when not feeling well. This year, especially because we, teachers and students, touch each others' hands and instruments both the Suzuki faculty and families are being asked **not to come to lessons if you are having any symptoms associated with the flu** -- fever, chills, shivering, onset of muscle/body aches and pains, etc. One lesson is not worth the risk of infecting many others. Advance notice of cancellations is greatly appreciated.

Because we do touch each others' hands and instruments, hand sanitizers and wipes are being provided to each studio and in the waiting room. Please be considerate of your teacher and peers and use them before your lesson. You will also be pleased to know that the UWSP custodial staff is

taking extra precautions in cleaning public areas, especially bathrooms, doorknobs and the like. Let's all do our part to minimize the spread of the flu this year.



Math Gaming Helps Young Suzuki Music Students Maintain Their Focus

Parents and instructors of young Suzuki students now have another tool to help aspiring music students improve their focus and concentration during their music lessons.

"Math Vitamins for Suzuki Students," is an 87-page book giving Suzuki parents and instructors a math activity guide with fun games to develop math skills. These can be interjected into practice and help motivate or keep the child's focus while learning both music and math skills. The book was written by Andy Felt, associate professor of mathematics, and George Kung, emeritus professor of mathematics (1969-2001) at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point (UWSP). The book offers over 50 math skill games for children between the ages of 3-7.

According to Felt, this book project was part of his 2008 sabbatical. The cross-campus collaboration included Felt and Kung of mathematical sciences, Patricia D'Ercole of UWSP's Aber Suzuki Center, Marge Andersen, head teacher at UWSP's Helen R. Godfrey University Child Learning and Care Center (UCLCC), and art students at the College of Fine Arts and Communication.

"This was a wonderful project that encompassed a lot of campus-wide cooperation, including art students who helped with lay-out and artwork for the book," said Felt. "The professionals at the UCLCC were gracious enough to allow us to test many of these math games on-site with four-year olds. Parents especially can engage their children with these math games while practicing their music at home."

All royalties from the book will go to the American Suzuki Foundation in Stevens Point. The book costs \$17.50 and can be purchased in the ASC office or through the Suzuki Association of the Americas in Boulder, Colo. The Association's web site is <http://suzukiassociation.org>.



Aber Honored as Woman of American History

The late Margery Aber, founder of the Suzuki Programs at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point (UWSP), has been honored posthumously as a Woman of American History by the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR).

Her life's accomplishments are now recorded at NSDAR headquarters in Washington D.C. in the book "Women in American History."

Recognized as one of the earliest pioneers of Shinichi Suzuki's method of teaching string music to young children, Aber was among the first American string teachers to visit Matsumoto, Japan, to study with Suzuki. She came to UWSP in 1967 and in 1971 it was there that she founded the first summer Suzuki Institute to be held outside of Japan. The event continues to be held annually at UWSP.

Her Suzuki program at UWSP became the model for more than 70 institutes around the country. She also assisted in establishing the first Suzuki programs in Europe at an institute in Belgium and in 1983 she was part of a tour group that took the Suzuki method to mainland China. She was also credited for developing the first university degree programs to incorporate Suzuki string instruction into the curriculum. In 1984 UWSP Chancellor Philip Marshall granted her the title of associate professor emeritus in the Department of Music.

Having taught thousands of children during her career, in 1987 she created the Margery Aber Endowment Fund, which supports the Margery V. Aber Scholarships and the Aber Children's Scholarships.

Aber brought the first International Research Symposium on Talent Education to Stevens Point in 1990, gathering together researchers and teachers interested in talent education, early childhood development and other related areas of music education relevant to Suzuki.

In 2001, her book, "Hip! Hip! Hooray!", the story of her 30 years with the American Suzuki Institute in Stevens Point, was published days before her death at age 87. The American Suzuki Talent Education Center at UWSP is now named in her honor.



Student News

The following ASC students attended the American Suzuki Institute this summer: **Will Mitchell, Naomi Crump, Erik Sands, Emma Sands, Erik O'Reilly, Michael Josephson, Laura Josephson, Luisa Marion, Bryce Marion, Stacey Rolak, Jonathan Cochrane, Wade Dittburner, Rachel Reichert, Lara Prebble, Lauren Sheibley, Maggie Medo, Rachel Ley, Jon Peck, Tom Felt, Craig Felt, Teddy Schenkman, Joanna Sakamaki, Gerald Sakamaki, Alyssa Schroeckenthaler, Annie Yao, Kate Young, Sabrina Tang, Lillian Mahon, Elisabeth Mahon, Hope Mahon, Marco Kurzynski, Aidan Simons and Ada Sell.**

Congratulations to **Mikaela Schneider** for being chosen to sing the National Anthem at the Milwaukee Brewer game this summer.

To **Joe Dickinson** for being chosen to sing the role of Gaston in the Marshfield UW Extension's Junior production of *Beauty and the Beast*.

To **Hannah Walker** for being chosen to sing the role of Marian in the Winneconi Community Theater production of *The Music Man*.

And to **Natalie Leek** for being chosen to sing the role of Marte in the Wausau Community Theaters Production of *The Sound of Music*.

ASC students, **Kate Young, Alyssa Schroeckenthaler, Peter Meilahn**, along with Jennifer Burton and one of her students were part of a group of 30 Suzuki students who attended the Suzuki Association of Wisconsin Winter Workshop, and played the Star Spangled Banner for the Brewers Game on August 28. The event was sponsored by the Suzuki Association of Wisconsin.



Many thanks to the ASC students who participated in ASC summer performances:

Waupaca Band Shell: Hope Mahon, Lilly Mahon, Isa Mahon, Nathaniel Taylor, Abishua Kealiher, Cal Irons, Sarah Irons, Emma Sands, Erik Sands, Maggie Medo, Alyssa Eiden, Sawyer Eiden, Havilah Vang, Jonathan Cochrane, Rachel Reichert, Audrey Mutschlecner, Olivia Yang, and Emily Clay.

Garden Parade: Emily Clay, Audrey Mutschlecner, Isa Mahon, Natalie Van Tiem, Ethan Allar, Clara Allar, Sawyer Eiden, Alyssa Eiden, Will Mitchell, Maleah Zinda, Antony Van Tiem, Frederick Van Tiem, Anjali Iyengar, Natalie Leek, Madison Tepp, Brit Holz, Sam Ginnett, Tim Hofer, Elizabeth Hofer and Michael LeGault.



Eat to the Beat: Sarah Irons, Ted Irons, Antony Van Tiem, Christina Marchel, Eleanor Mutschlecner, Frederick Van Tiem, Rachel Reichert, Teresita Marchel, Elijah Vang, Havilah Vang, Julida Kochanowski, Trevor Carlson, and Samantha Carlson.



Thank you to all the students who participated in the September 19th Marathon's Big Sound Mini-Concert!





Faculty News

Pat D'Ercole taught Book 2 & 3 teacher training at the Intermountain Suzuki String Institute, June 11-20, the Every Child Can! Course, and Book 1 teacher training at the Montana Institute in Missoula, July 17-25. And Book 2 & 3 teacher training at the America Suzuki Institute July 26-August 7.



For Sale

Beautiful 3/4 Rudoulf Doetsch Violin No. 2982 with hard case and bow. Made by Violin House of Weaver (Potter Violin Company in Bethesda, MD). Newer strings and hard case with large music zip pocket and accessory compartments, plus convertible shoulder/backpack strap. Potter Violin Company has this violin listed for \$1320. Perfect violin for an accomplished Suzuki student – amazing tone. \$975.00

1/8 size violin manufactured by Suzuki Violin Company, LTD No. 101 R R with hard case and two wood bows. \$200 *

1/4 size Lewis and Son violin No. 00053 includes older hard case and wood bow. \$250 *

1/2 size Stradivarius copy with newer blue exterior/maroon interior hard case (music and accessory compartments) and composite bow. Also includes 1/2 size KUN. \$450 *

* Sold together at a discount, or separately. All were chosen for excellent quality and tone.

For more information, call 715-570-1391.

Upcoming Events

Tuesday, October 13, 2009
Parent Education Session
"First You Gotta Create...Da Mood"
7:30 pm, NFAC 144

Saturday, October 24, 2009
Marathon, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Sunday, October 25, 2009
Solo Recitals, 2:00 and 3:30 pm
NFAC Michelsen Hall

Saturday, October 31, 2009
Piano Halloween Recital, 11:00 and 12:30
NFAC Michelsen Hall

Saturday, November 7, 2009
Music of the Masters
Holiday Inn & Convention Center, Stevens Point
6:00 – 9:00 pm
Tickets available from any Aber Suzuki Center teacher, in the ASC Office, the UWSP Box Office (346-4242), and from American Suzuki Foundation Board Members

Tuesday, November 10, 2009
Parent Education Session
"How to Get the Most from Your Lessons"
7:30 pm, NFAC 144

Saturday, November 21, 2009
Marathon, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Sunday, November 22, 2009
Solo Recitals, 2:00 and 3:30 pm
NFAC Michelsen Hall

Tuesday, December 8, 2009
Parent Education Session
"Suzuki, Translating the Philosophy into Reality"
7:30 pm, NFAC 144

Saturday, December 12, 2009
Marathon, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Sunday, December 13, 2009
Solo Recitals, 2:00 and 3:30 pm
NFAC Michelsen Hall

