



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*

March 2003

From the Director's Desk

By Dee Martz

Undoubtedly you have heard ASTEC faculty members refer to the SAA and perhaps even seen the SAA journal out in the studio. I know that some of you are members (congratulations for making this decision) and that some of you may not even know what S-A-A stands for. It is the Suzuki Association of the Americas, the organization that binds together the Suzuki world in the western hemisphere.

I encourage you to visit <http://www.suzukiassociation.org> where you can find information about the SAA. I know as a Suzuki parent and a Suzuki teacher that the parents are responsible for the most challenging part of making the Suzuki triangle work. The Ambassador exists to present some tools to assist you as you deal with the daily challenges. You can find even more on the SAA website as there is a whole section of the site for parents. In this way you can take advantage of the ideas and work of Suzuki professionals beyond ASTEC.



Before You Open Your Mouth or Begin to Play Your Instrument!

By Mary Hofer

How fun is it to begin a new song or a new piece of music! Sometimes in the excitement of beginning the new music we jump right in and forget to take the opportunity to study the music first.

When we take the time to study the music first, we can avoid unnecessary tension and/or the need to repeat or fix things because we learned them wrong. By studying the music first, we also obtain a better concept of what the composer may have intended.

Here are some suggestions for studying your music before you begin to sing or play your instrument.

Learn about the composer of your music. Learn a little about the composer's life and what was occurring in history at the time the music was written. Consider how history might have influenced the composer.

Find out about the poet or lyricist. Read the poetry through and again do a little research into why the author may have written the poem or story. Perhaps the words came from a famous play or novel. Once again, think about what was happening in history during the time the words were written.

You may find some very interesting stories that will help you interpret the music. Perhaps the piece is program music or based on a famous folk song or folk tale. Many of the pieces from the early instrumental books come from old folk songs or dances. Maybe you can find out for what purpose the music was played or sung, such as during a specific holiday or community event. Knowing more about the music helps develop children's imaginations and feelings for the music.

Considering the historical events happening in other parts of the world as well as the composer's and/or lyricist's life is an important part of better understanding and appreciating the history of music, the various musical periods, and how and why music differs from one period to another.

Try to find more than one recording of your new music.

Perhaps you can even find a video performance. Listen to the various artists performing your music and note the similarities and the differences. Listen also to what the accompaniment is like versus the melody line. Does the accompaniment help the melody or does it make it more difficult? Often we think of the accompaniment as background music rather than a partnership that can help us interpret the music. While you listen, note the harmony and the repeats. Are there scale passages or sequences that are repeated throughout the music? Do the various artists use different cadenzas, dynamics, and phrasing?

Study your music. Look at the rhythm, phrasing, words, form, and articulation. How do they differ from recording to recording? Try clapping or tapping out the rhythms of the music. If there are words, speak the words in rhythm. Notice which phrases are legato or staccato. Where does the singer breathe? If your song is in a foreign language, go through the words with your teacher for pronunciations. If your piece has fingerings, perhaps you can sing the numbers to the music. Try conducting your music; both to the recording and as you study the written music.

Singers learning music in a foreign language must translate word for word. If you cannot find a translation, you need to use a dictionary and translate word for word. Many times a student will fall in love with a melody but when they learn what the text is, the song loses its appeal.

While it is great fun to jump into new music, taking time to learn about the music in addition to learning the music itself is important. It helps us gain a better understanding of the entire composition. When we learn about the music, our imagination can begin to soar, and as we study the music, we are memorizing.

Hopefully, these suggestions will help us avoid unnecessary tension or the need to relearn passages learned incorrectly. In addition, we'll likely be better able to interpret the music. Remember – the "practice room" is in the mind and much can be achieved before we even open our mouths or begin to play!



Voila Viola

By Dee Martz

During my week in San Juan I was intrigued by the singing sounds that filled the air each time it rained, even in the congested areas of the city. Because San Juan is on the north shore of the Caribbean Island Puerto Rico it rained several times a day so I was able to enjoy this sound many, many times. Imagine my surprise when I learned that the sweet and joyful sounds that I heard were made by the coqui, a small frog that is about the size of a dime. The coqui is native only to the island of Puerto Rico where they live high in the trees and are rarely seen. However, a life-sized model now lives on the shelves in my studio where the coqui sounds that can be heard occasionally from the stereo system explain the content look on its face.

Frogs seem to be part of my life everywhere. Hopefully viola, which is even more important to me than frogs, will soon become part of the Suzuki programs in Puerto Rico where violin is the only upper string in the Suzuki world. Currently several of the most active Suzuki teachers in San Juan are extremely accomplished professional violist so I think that the move into Suzuki viola is inevitable.



Notes from the Endpin

By Lawrence Leviton

Cello Day 2003

On Sunday February 9th, 55 cellists came to the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point for a day of cello related activities. **Marc Johnson** of the Vermeer Quartet and Northern Illinois University was our guest clinician and performer for the day. The day's events included master classes, an hour of quartet coaching by Mr. Johnson, cello techniques classes and an exciting concluding concert. Mr. Johnson was a marvel, both as a teacher and as a performer. He offered insightful, supportive, and always helpful comments in the master classes. I was most impressed with his ability to find something positive and constructive to say to every student whether they were playing the Bach Arioso or the last movement of Haydn C Major Concerto. He gently challenged all of the students to find their own musical solutions in their pieces. The beauty of his playing shone

through even in the smallest of playing examples that he gave during classes.

The quartet coaching session was revelatory; Mr. Johnson, who had just returned from a European tour with the Vermeer demonstrated how one quartet could use bow placement and management to create unusual colors in the Turina "Oracion del torero." He encouraged another quartet to use a faster tempo in the Beethoven Opus 18, No. 2 last movement. The results were immediate and turned a good but serviceable performance into one filled with great charm and excitement.

In our techniques class we talked about basic cello principles including: tone production, vibrato development, and how to create a variety of bow strokes effectively on the cello. The final concert included soloists, the UWSP cello choir and the massed Cello Day Cello Choir in arrangements of classical and contemporary works. One fun piece was Rodney Farrar's arrangement of Ellington's C Jam Blues. Eight intrepid cellists got out their improv chops and created some unique solos. All in all, Cello Day 2003 was great fun for the students, clinicians, and friends in the audience.



Student News

Eric Christensen and **Jamie Davis** were soloists in the Cello Day 2003 Gala Final Concert

Emily Hope made an appearance on Channel 7 in its Cello Day Report on February 9th.

Aaron Bauer, Tyler Bauer, Michael Bauer, Johnathan Cochrane, Brynn Rathjen, Emma Sands, Erik Sands and Gretchen Sands and **Rado Wilke** were strolling violinists for the Valentine's Day dinner at Shepherd of the Lakes Church in Waupaca.

Kristin Mocadlo will present her Senior Violin and Marimba Recital on Sunday, March 2nd, accompanied by David Becker and Fred Karpoff on piano, and Melissa Mocadlo on violin.



Faculty News

Lawrence Leviton performed with guest artist Marc Johnson on the Cello Day Concert on February 9th.

Lawrence Leviton narrated a concert of film music with the Wood County Symphony on February 20th.

Lawrence Leviton performed with the CWSO in their February Concert

Tom Yang was a guest clinician for Columbia Talent Education Association in Columbia Missouri on February 1st.

Pat D'Ercole attended an SAA Teacher Development Committee meeting in Denver, CO Jan. 2-5. She was also a clinician at the workshop for string students in Slinger, WI on Feb. 1. On Feb. 7, she gave a presentation entitled, "Suzuki, Past, Present and Future" for the "Get To The Point" speaker series sponsored by the Portage Co. Seniors at the Lincoln Center. **Anjali Iyengar, Christina Marchel, Teresita Marchel** and **Maria Marchel** assisted in the presentation that was later televised on cable access.

Dee Martz attended the Suzuki Association of the Americas Board of Directors meeting in Boston Massachusetts January 24-26. At that meeting she was elected secretary of the Board. Her two year term as secretary begins on August 1, 2003.

Dee Martz was a clinician at the seventh annual Suzuki Festival in San Juan, Puerto Rico, February 15-17. Her knowledge of the Spanish language came in handy in this bilingual U.S. territory.



February, 2003 Graduates

Jeremiah Grothe, Violin, Book 5
Joe Bartow, Violin, Book 2
Madeleine DeBot, Violin, Book 9
Jonathan Cochrane, Violin, Twinkle
Ross Moore, Violin, Book 10
Ben Karbowski, Violin, Book 4
Zachary Markman, Piano, Book 2
Sarah Rosenthal, Piano, Twinkle
James Banovetz, Piano, Book 2
Anna Krueger, Cello, Book 8

Upcoming Events

March 8, 2003, **Marathon Saturday**

March 9, 2003, **Group and Solo Recitals**, 2:00 pm, **UC Alumni Room**

April 5, 2003, **Piano Marathon**

April 26, 2003, **Marathon Saturday (except piano)**

April 27, 2003, **String Festival Concert**, Ben Franklin Junior High School Auditorium, 2:00 pm



For Sale

A 1907 Eugene Marchand violin. It is a beautiful instrument with a one-piece back, and a very shiny finish. The sound is amazing--warm and resonant. It projects well in a hall. Asking price is \$15,000. If anyone has questions or is interested in looking at it, please contact Maia Travers at (608) 294-7809.



Did You Know?

Did you know that ASTEC recitals are digitally recorded on CD? Well, they are! Parents can visit the Instructional Materials Center (IMC) located on the third floor of the University library (Learning Resource Center) and make a copy of an entire recital CD, or just select pieces. The CD can then be used as an audition tape, a special gift for someone far away, or for your personal collection! Blank CDs can be purchased at the IMC, or you can bring your own. Copying must be done on site – the CDs are not available for checkout. For more information, call the IMC at 346-4246.



2003 American Suzuki Institute

The brochure is out and applications are pouring in! If you are interested in attending the 2003 American Suzuki Institute, **apply early**. Applications are accepted in the order in which they are received, and enrollment is limited. Some classes were filled in mid-April last year, and they seem to fill earlier each year.

Your ASTEC teacher has a supply of brochures, you can stop by our office in Room 004, or you can view and download the information from our website: www.uwsp.edu/cofac/suzuki.



THINK SPRING!!

