

# 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 2005

### From the Director's Desk

By Dee Martz

I just returned from Peru where I represented the Suzuki Association of the Americas (SAA) at the III Encuentro de Profesores Suzuki de América Latina. (The Third Conference of Latin American Suzuki Teachers) I had the opportunity to speak about the work of the SAA and to give an introductory session on the concept of Servant Leadership\*. Perhaps the most valuable opportunity I had was to talk individually with teachers from all over Latin America about their work and their dreams. What was immediately apparent is the palpable commitment to the Suzuki Philosophy and an excitement about sharing it with as many children as possible. Of course many teachers and parents in North America feel the excitement and express a commitment to the Suzuki philosophy but somehow this was different. I came away with the sense that involvement with Suzuki programs is treasured with a special intensity because in Latin America many families have very little beyond the essentials of life. Because of this families recognize and are empowered by the philosophy and methods of Dr. Suzuki and speak openly about the enormous impact on their everyday life.

As I wondered why this was less true here in North America I found myself focusing on the overwhelming opportunities available for families in central Wisconsin. There are myriad wonderful programs in the arts, in sports and in academics for all ages. As a result we find ourselves juggling so many activities that we need to post color coded calendars on the kitchen wall to keep track of who is doing what, when. With all the "to do" we

manage to get the practice time organized but we may be missing out on the best part of being a Suzuki family. I think that our busy life styles make it more difficult for us to experience the magical impact of Dr. Suzuki's philosophy. I found it refreshing and empowering to gain a fresh view through the eyes of the Latin American Suzuki teachers and invite you all to step back, take a deep breath and think how Dr. Suzuki's ideas can influence your everyday lives.

\*for more information <http://greenleaf.org>



### Once in a Lifetime Opportunities

By Thomas Yang

This past summer my wife, my in-laws, my baby daughter and I had the opportunity of watching a major league baseball game in a lovely new ballpark. As expected, my daughter required attention that would take us away from the game. When it was my turn to take Olivia out for a walk, my first reaction was: "Too bad that I can't see the game, how often do I get a chance to see a major league baseball game?" My value system had become confused because the baseball game was a rare opportunity and because of this, watching the game had attained a sense of urgency. On the other hand, walking my daughter seemed like an experience that I could have any day. For a brief moment I felt obligated to watch a game that I didn't really care about – simply because it was a rare experience. Upon reflection, I realized that I

didn't really care much about the outcome of the game, I had seen enough of the ballpark to appreciate its beauty and that walking my daughter is one of the most enjoyable experiences that I have on earth. Once I realized this, missing the game to walk my daughter became sheer pleasure. For the lack of better terms, I will call experiences such as my watching this baseball game "once in a lifetime" opportunities and experiences such as walking my daughter, "everyday" experiences.

We all recognize the "once in a lifetime" opportunities. They come in the form of:

- Purchases of gardening, kitchen or office gadgets that we didn't think we needed until it was marked down or available for a limited time only.
- New flavors of ice cream that are at the sweet shop "for this week only" making it necessary to break a diet in order to experience this "once in a lifetime" culinary event.
- School activities that disrupt homework, home life, good sleeping and eating habits, but must be participated in because your high school (or junior high school or elementary school or kindergarten) years are a "once in a life" opportunity.
- Limited edition collectibles.
- Television specials that we need to see because they are a – well, you get the idea.

What "once in a lifetime opportunities" have in common is a sense of urgency. They are perceived to be rare, tend to be glitzy and seem to be limited in time and number. The problem is that these opportunities frequently have no benefit to our lives. Because of this urgency, we tend not to take the time to consider whether this opportunity benefits us at all. We are frequently cornered into making fast, faulty and sometimes expensive decisions.

"Once in a lifetime opportunities" are usually noisy, big affairs, they are usually immediately engaging, they usually require little self-initiation and they

aren't usually really once in a lifetime – they only seem that way. Hence a trip to Disney World, even if done every year is considered "once in a lifetime" where an opportunity to read a great piece of literature for the first time is an "every day experience" that can be done anytime.

The results of these "once in a lifetime opportunities" are legion. We have attics and garages full of objects incongruent with our lifestyles and tastes. We spend half our hours chauffeuring our children from one activity to another. We touch on many pursuits but master none of them.

One may well ask how disruptive can a "once in a lifetime" opportunity be, after all "once in a lifetime" implies infrequency. The problem is that we now live in the age of all you can eat buffets, an age where countless varieties of experiences are available – there are hundreds of television channels, major sport seasons overlap each other, school activities have grown more ambitious and cellular telephones make people reachable at all times. Never have there been so many opportunities – to be interrupted.

The fact is that every experience is in a sense a unique. The disciplines that seem to be every day, like practicing a musical instrument or doing algebra homework are in reality unique experiences because every practice allows new insights or births new abilities. These experiences are not so much ordinary as they are integrated – unique parts of a greater whole. It turns out that any accomplishment of complexity requires an environment of regularity in which to develop, whether it is learning play the piano, getting into good physical condition, mastering algebra or raising a child. Mastery of complex skills requires time because it takes time for all the component skills involved to become deeply rooted in a person.

Steven Covey on the importance of setting priorities wrote:

Urgent matters are usually visible. They press on us; they insist on action. They're often popular with others. They're usually

right in front of us. And often they are pleasant, easy, fun to do. But so often they are unimportant!

*Importance*, on the other hand, has to do with results. If something is important, it contributes to your mission, your values, your high priority goals. (151) (emphasis his).

If our vision for our children is for them to be well educated, well-balanced, highly cultured persons, than the everyday activities of schoolwork, practicing and chores are by Covey's definition the "important" (151) things.

To be certain, there are "once in a lifetime opportunities" that should be taken advantage of. Hearing a great musician can be a visionary experience for a child struggling in his music studies. Attending a lecture or a sermon by a great speaker can be a truly life-changing experience. The trick is to not confuse the rarity of an event with the value of the event. If we attempt to take in every event simply because it is not an every day occurrence we may destroy the rhythms of our daily lives – rhythms that are required for any real productivity or creativity. If we do not actively choose to maintain these regular rhythms, we will be at the mercy of a cultural environment that by its nature does not allow for quiet, does not allow for reflection and that inculcates reaction to urgent situations rather than reflection on what is right and true. To avoid losing our footing to this lifestyle mayhem requires difficult decision-making. But to not decide is to lose control of how you live as Covey further notes, "Keep in mind that you are always saying 'no' to something. If it isn't to the apparent, urgent things in your life, it is probably to the more fundamental, highly important things. Even when the urgent is good, the good can keep you from your best, keep you from your unique contribution, if you let it" (157). In other words, your "no" to some activity can often be in reality a yes to something else. All of us have often wondered: When will we have the time to read the books on our lists? How can we spend more time with our children? How can we get some time just to breathe? We need to say "no" to activities that don't matter in order to say "yes" to the things that

do. This applies to things as well as activities. If you start collecting figurines, you will have to spend the time to dust it. If you plant a garden you will need to water it (and yes I am an avid gardener if you are wondering). If you take up a new hobby you will need time to attend to it. If you join a club, you will need time to attend meetings. Everything we do or buy has an effect on the quality and perhaps the outcome of our lives.

A full schedule does not equal a productive life. There is a misconception that having a well-rounded personality entails exposure to varied experiences. My own personal experience in learning is that breadth of learning is caused by depth of learning. One becomes widely read when one has a solid base of knowledge to build on. The ability to apply what you have learned, to transfer your abilities to other applications and to integrate it to other pieces of knowledge depends on knowledge learned deeply and well. C. S. Lewis, a scholar of remarkable breadth wrote of his own education:

In those days a boy on the classical side officially did almost nothing but classics. I think this was wise, the greatest service we can do to education today is to teach fewer subjects. No one has time to do more than a very few things well before he is twenty, and when we force a boy to be a mediocrity in a dozen subjects we destroy his standards, perhaps for life. Smewgy [Lewis' teacher] taught us Latin and Greek, but everything else came in incidentally. (112-113)

Suzuki, reflecting on an account of a man teaching a bird to say it's name, wrote:

Once a shoot comes out into the open, it grows faster and faster. After teaching the bird to say, by repeating it three thousand times, "Peeko," "Miyazawa" was added. This time, after having heard "Peeko Miyazawa" daily for fifteen minutes, he could say it after only two hundred times.

No doubt it is the same with a human being. Whatever he learns, the beginning

will be slow until the “bud of ability” takes hold. This procedure requires time, but gradually a high ability develops. Isn’t this true? To think it is hopeless or to give up because at first there are no visible results makes all the former training done with so much trouble a waste. *The first “planted” ability will also wither away.* It is therefore a matter of patience and repetition. If this is done – and we have watched the splendid training Peeko had – we can well understand that *ability breeds ability.* (6) (emphasis added)

In this text, Suzuki argues that having planted the seeds of ability we must allow that ability to take root (6). To give up and dig up seeds because there is no immediate result would be counterproductive (Suzuki 6). To expand on Suzuki’s illustration, adding activity upon activity to a child’s schedule without providing the time and environment to cultivate any real skills would be akin to reseeding ground before giving the seed that was already sown a chance to sprout. For a person to be truly well rounded we must patiently wait for the “bud of ability” in the seeds we choose to sow (Suzuki 6). Only then can we see that “ability breeds ability” (Suzuki 6).

So what does this all mean? First it implies that we must consider carefully what we want our children to be involved in. We need to meditate on the values that we wish to pass on to our children. We then need to consider whether the activity that we are considering is congruent with these values. What are the benefits of this activity? How will it shape the lives of our children and our families? What are the costs to our family? Will our children grow through this activity? Don’t assume that because everyone does this activity that it is necessarily good for your child. When it comes to your child, you are the expert. Take into account whether this will degrade the quality of the activities that you already have in place. Second, follow Suzuki’s advice and patiently cultivate the seeds that you do plant (6). Protect your environment from disruption. For a music student, daily practice is the ground in which the seeds of musical ability are planted. If we allow our practice schedule to be destabilized with interruptions of “once in a lifetime” events, the only truly “once

in a lifetime” event will be occasions that we actually practice.

If you are reading this article, you are quite likely a Suzuki parent. You have decided that music education is a priority for your family. You have already invested in your child’s ability through lessons, the purchase of an instrument, the energy and time of attending lessons and coaching practices. Protect this investment and effort by not overcrowding the garden you’ve planted. An overcrowded garden ends up being empty because nothing survives. Your child will not develop multiple abilities until he has mastered at least one. Then having tasted mastery, he will begin to understand quality, perseverance and complex problem solving. You will then see Suzuki’s idea “that ability breeds ability” (6) is at work in your child as he will have been given the tools to master more than you’ve ever dreamed possible.

Covey, Stephen R. The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People. New York: A Fireside Book, Simon & Schuster, 1990.

Lewis, C. S. Surprised by Joy. San Diego: A Harvest/HBJ Book, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1984.

Suzuki, Shinichi. Nurtured by Love: The Classic Approach to Talent Education. Trans. Waltraud Suzuki. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Suzuki Method International, Summy-Birchard Inc. distributed by Warner Bros. Publications Inc., Miami, 1983.



**Notes from the Endpin**  
By Lawrence Leviton

I hope you all had a happy and healthy holiday season. Thanks again to all the participants who gave a lovely performance at the Edgewater Manor before Christmas. As always, your music really made a difference in brightening up the

holiday season for the residents there. Congratulations to all the performers at the December 3<sup>rd</sup> Cello Choir concert which was a rousing success. I'd like to thank Mary Hofer and the Astec singers who made a wonderful contribution to the program.

The marathon schedule will remain the same this semester:

Pre-Twinkle Class 9-9:20  
Books 1-3: 9:20-Cookie Break  
Books 4 and above: 10:45-12

Have a great spring semester !



### Voila Viola

By Dee Martz

I'd like to share the following article as a New Year's Resolution for all viola players. It first appeared in the Piano Patter column written by Dale Hansen which ran in the December, 1989 Ambassador.

#### Avoid "Mindless" Practice

The old saying "practice makes perfect" is said over and over in homes across the country, but one must be careful with the kind of practice that is being done. So many factors need to be considered; the time of day, how long, what to practice. The most important factor is what your mind is doing. It must be focused on the practicing and nothing else. Josef Lhevine has a wonderful way of explaining "mindless practice":

"Avoid worry and distractions of any kind when you are practicing. Your mind must be every minute on what you are doing, or the value of your practice is lessened enormously. By intense concentration, love of your work and the spirit in which you approach it, you can do more in a half hour than in an hour spent purposelessly. Do not think you have been practicing if you have played a single note with your mind on anything else.

When you practice in the right spirit you don't know what it is to get tired."

Make it a New Year's Resolution to never practice "mindlessly" and to never play a note unless it is coming from the heart.

### Safety First!

Children often explore inside and outside the Suzuki House while their sibling is having a lesson. For safety's sake, please, monitor your child's whereabouts.



### Weekend Happenings

Announcing a new webpage dedicated to the weekend happenings of the American Suzuki Talent Education Center (ASTEC). On the Weekend Happenings page, you'll find Marathon times and locations. You'll also find the time and location of the Solo Recitals, a list of students performing, and rehearsal times and locations. This information will also be posted on the bulletin board in the front lobby of the Suzuki House, and on the door of each teacher.

We will continue to telephone each person performing on the Solo Recitals, but as a back-up, we hope to have the information posted on the Weekend Happenings webpage, and in the Suzuki House, by Wednesday morning the week of a recital. The website address is: [www.uwsp.edu/cofac/suzuki](http://www.uwsp.edu/cofac/suzuki).

## Faculty News

**Tom Yang** was a guest clinician for a workshop at the New Ulm Suzuki School of Music, New Ulm, Minnesota on January 15. At the workshop, he and his wife Jenni, performed Francis Poulenc's The Story of Babar for Narrator and Piano.

**Pat D'Ercole** was a teacher trainer and clinician at the XX International Suzuki Festival in Lima, Peru January 9-14 and 18-23, 2005. She also presented at two sessions of the SAA Latin American Leadership Conference also in Lima, on January 15.

**Dee Martz** attended the meeting of the Board of Directors of the Suzuki Association of the Americas in Boulder, Colorado from January 6-9. She is currently the Board secretary.

**Dee Martz** represented the SAA Board of Directors at the III Encuentro de Profesores Suzuki de América Latina in Lima, Peru January 12-14, where she spoke about the work of the SAA and presented a session on Servant Leadership.

**Dee Martz** performed the Mozart trio for clarinet, viola and piano on the UWSP Faculty and Friends Chamber Music Recital on January 25.



## Marshfield Recital

You are invited to attend a recital on Sunday, February 6<sup>th</sup> at 3:30 pm, at the First Presbyterian Church, 200 S. Lincoln Avenue, Marshfield. Performers include **Tom Yang**, piano, Jenni Yang, clarinet, Andrea Splittberger-Rosen, clarinet, **Dee Martz**, viola, and Lily Chia Brissman, piano.



## Madeleine DeBot to Present Senior Recital

Madeleine (Maddie) DeBot will present her senior recital on Sat. Feb. 12 at 2:00 in Michelsen Hall. She will be assisted by pianist David Becker, the Corona String Quartet, and siblings, Margot, cello, and McLean and Michael on violin.

The program will open with the Bartok *Rumanian Folk Dances* followed by the light and cheerful third movement of the Mendelssohn *Concerto e minor* for violin. The Corona String Quartet, whose members, in addition to Maddie include Katie Munck, violin, Jane Mitchell, viola, and Jamie Davis, cello, will play the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> movements of the *String Quartet No. Op. 76, No. 5* of F. J. Haydn. The program will continue with the DeBot Family performing and arrangement for two violins and cello of the Suzuki Book 2 piece, *Hunters' Chorus*. The program will close with two violin solos, Sarasate's *Romanza Andaluza* and Aaron Copeland's rousing *Hoedown*.

Maddie began her violin studies with Pat D'Ercole at the age of 4. In addition to the playing with the Corona String Quartet, she is concertmistress of the Central State Chamber Orchestra. She is also a member of the Central Wisconsin Symphony Orchestra. She has also played in the Waupaca Festival Orchestra and in 1998, was selected by audition for the National Youth Orchestra at the Suzuki Association 8<sup>th</sup> Conference. She has participated in the WSMA Solo and Ensemble Festival where she has consistently received starred firsts.

Maddie attends Pacelli High School where she uses her musical talents for school drama productions and liturgies. She is a 4- year varsity tennis letter winner, a member of the National Honor Society and a board member of the Youth Advisory Committee for the Stevens Point Volunteer Center. She plans to attend the University of Wisconsin as a music major and is currently first runner up for UW-Madison's 4 year scholarship.



## Student News

Congratulations to **Rachel Ley** for practicing 100 days in a row. Rachel has kept practicing and is now on her way to 200!

**Madeleine DeBot** will present her senior recital on Saturday, February 12<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 in Michelsen Hall. She will be assisted by **David Becker**, piano, **Katie Munck**, violin, **Jane Mitchell**, viola, **Jamie Davis**, cello, **Michael DeBot**, violin, **McLean DeBot** violin and **Margot DeBot**, cello.

**Billy Jenkins** will be presenting his senior violin recital on Sunday, February 6<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 pm in Michelsen Hall.

Congratulations to **Jesse Nummelin**, **James Banovetz** and **Peter Munck** for their performances in the P.J. Jacobs play at Sentry Theater in January.



## December 2004 Graduates

**Grace Luetmer**, Violin Book 4  
**Anna Luetmer**, Violin Book 10  
**Michael Crump**, Violin Book 4  
**Emily Clay**, Cello Book 2  
**Maleah Zinda**, Violin Twinkle  
**Stacey Rolak**, Violin Book 5



## January 2005 Graduates

**Sarah Thimmesch**, Violin Twinkle  
**Signe Johnson**, Piano Book 1  
**Emily Janik**, Piano Book 2  
**Teddy Schenkman**, Violin Book 3  
**Sam Schenkman**, Violin Book 6

**Jayson Schedgick**, Cello Twinkle  
**Alan Kiepert**, Violin Book 2  
**Emma Butler**, Viola Twinkle  
**Bethany Anderson**, Viola Book 1  
**Antony VanTiem**, Violin Book 1



## Upcoming Events

**Saturday, February 19<sup>th</sup>**, Marathon Saturday

**Sunday, February 20<sup>th</sup>**, Solo Recitals, 2:00 and 3:30 pm, Michelsen Hall

**Saturday, March 12<sup>th</sup>**, Marathon Saturday

**Sunday, March 13<sup>th</sup>**, Solo Recitals, 2:00 and 3:30 pm, UC Alumni Room

**Saturday, April 9<sup>th</sup>**, Marathon Saturday (piano only)

**Sunday, April 10<sup>th</sup>**, Solo Recitals, 2:00 and 3:30 pm, Michelsen Hall

**Saturday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>**, Marathon Saturday (except piano)

**Sunday, April 24<sup>th</sup>**, String & Voice Festival Concert, 2:00 pm, Michelsen Hall

**Saturday, May 14<sup>th</sup>**, Solo & Ensemble Concert, 2:00 and 3:30 pm, Michelsen Hall

**Saturday, May 14<sup>th</sup>**, CSCO Concert, 7:30 pm, Michelsen Hall

**Sunday, May 15<sup>th</sup>**, Piano Festival Concert, 2:00 and 3:30 pm, Michelsen Hall.



## 100 Ways for a Parent to Say "Very Good"

You've got it made!  
You're on the right track now!  
You are very good at that!  
That's much better!  
I'm happy to see you working like that!  
You're doing a great job!  
That's the best you have ever done!  
I knew you could do it!  
Now you've figured it out!  
Now you have it!  
Great!  
Keep working on it, you're getting better!  
You make it look easy!  
You're a great help!  
You're getting better every day!  
You're really growing up!  
Nice going!  
Sensational!  
That's the way to do it!  
That's a kind thing you did!  
That's my boy/girl!  
Perfect!  
You're really going to town!  
Terrific!  
You're a real prince/princess!  
You've just about mastered that!  
Outstanding!  
You did that very well!  
Fantastic!  
You're really improving!  
Superb!  
Keep it up!  
You've got that down pat!  
Tremendous!  
Good thinking!  
Keep on trying!  
I've never seen anyone do it better!  
I like that!  
I'm very proud of you!  
I think you've got it now!  
You figured that out fast!  
That's really nice!  
That's right!  
That's good!

When I'm with you I feel like singing!  
Good work!  
I'm proud of the way you worked today!  
You're really working hard today!  
You've just about got it!  
That's it!  
Congratulations!  
That's quite an improvement!  
You are doing that much better today.  
I sure am happy you are my child.  
You are learning fast!  
Good for you!  
Couldn't have done it better myself.  
You really make being a parent fun!  
One more time and you'll have it!  
You did it that time!  
That's the way!  
Now you've figured it out!  
You haven't missed a thing!  
Keep up the good work!  
Nothing can stop you now!  
Excellent!  
That's the best ever!  
Fine!  
You've got your brain in gear today!  
Wonderful!  
That's a masterpiece!  
Nice going!  
Now that's what I call a fine job!  
You must have been practicing!  
You're doing beautifully!  
Right on!  
Good remembering!  
You did a lot of work today!  
You certainly did well today!  
You're doing fine!  
You are really learning a lot!  
You out-did yourself today!  
Good for you!  
Good going!  
Marvelous!  
You're doing the best you can!  
Good job, (child's name)!  
You remembered!