

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*

May 2005

From the Director's Desk

By Dee Martz

Dean Gerard McKenna, a very dear friend of the Suzuki program is set to retire from UWSP this summer. We will miss the understanding and strong support that he has given the Suzuki program since he first arrived at UWSP in 1989. Dean McKenna really knows about the Suzuki philosophy and understands the impact that Dr. Suzuki's ideas and methods have had on music education in the United States. His first encounter with Suzuki was when he was a college student and heard the Japan Tour group in person. It is obvious that the profound effect hearing this superb musical group stayed with Dean McKenna through the passing decades. As a music educator and then an arts administrator he knows that having Suzuki Talent Education in the U.S. has not only changed the quality of string playing but has had an overall positive effect on music education.

After all these years, Dean McKenna earned his own Twinkle!

The McKenna Twinkle*

Dean McKenna is the one
Fin'ly got the building done.
Went to Madison a lot,
Got the million in one shot.
Dean McKenna is the one
Fin'ly got the building done.

* Words by Patricia D'Ercole



Congratulations to ASTEC Review-a-thon Participants!

Congratulations to all the ASTEC students who participated in the Review-a-thon from March 15 to April 15. To date, we have collected \$1,631.67 plus a \$300 matching grant from an anonymous donor for a total of **\$1,931.67!!** What a very generous response for the Suzuki students of Santa Cruz, Bolivia!! Not only will they be happy to receive the supplies that they need to be able to study their instrument, but you also were winners. 8,033 minutes of practice time was logged between March 15 and April 15! That's 133.88 hours!!! Could there possibly be a connection between the beautiful music that was made and the preparation that you did? The time you spent reviewing actually made three gifts; helping the Suzuki children of Bolivia, growing in your own playing abilities and giving the gift of beautiful music to the audience at our Festival Concert.

The Suzuki Program was introduced in Bolivia in 1987 and Santa Cruz is the only city in Bolivia where lessons are given using this method. The Suzuki Association in Bolivia currently has professors of violin, piano, cello, and guitar, however due to the poor economic conditions, it is very difficult to obtain the materials necessary for successful teaching and learning. These materials are just some of the items on their wish list: strings of different sizes for violin, cello, viola, guitar, rosin, bridges, string adjusters for violin and cello, rubber tips, end pin holders for cello, chin rests, shoulder rests, metronomes, pitch pipes for violin, cello, and guitar, pegs, fingerboards, and music stands.

This isn't the first time that Wisconsinites have helped the Suzuki program in Bolivia. In the mid '90s, the Suzuki Association of Wisconsin helped to sponsor a teacher from Bolivia attend the Suzuki Association of the Americas Conference.

If you weren't able to participate in the Review-a-thon, but would like to make a donation, they will be accepted until May 13th. Please make checks payable to ASTEC.



18 Ideas for Musical Training in the Off-Season

By Pat D'Ercole

The warmer temperatures, the longer days and the gradual transformation of the landscape from white to green are all signs that spring is here. That means that the end of the semester and another school year are also close at hand. With the end of school days comes a change of schedule. For many, there is less predictability to the day or even the week. With more light and warmth the days seem to have more hours, and time spent outdoors seems to encourage more socializing and spontaneous "let's-drop-everything-and-go-to____" Lessons, too, are often irregular and because of that so is practice or at least the motivation to practice. What's a parent to do? What follows is a potpourri of ideas and ways of thinking about summer practice that may help.

Why take lessons: While lessons may be an option in the summer, practicing isn't. Why is it so hard then, to keep practicing when one doesn't have lessons? First of all, the main purpose of a lesson is to get feedback on our progress so far and to have a knowledgeable professional set the next goal for us. With a sporadic lesson schedule, students will often become bored with practice because they (or their parents) feel they have already accomplished their goals. Without input from the teacher, parents or students may not know what the next step should be and just get tired of "treading water." What keeps us motivated in practice is having a goal that is just slightly out of our reach, but attainable.

Secondly, practice slacks off in the absence of lessons because there is no one to answer to other than the parent. It's a lot easier to make excuses to mom or dad than it is to give them to the teacher, especially when supposedly there is more free time. In any case, having to answer to someone who can be more objective and less likely to accept our rationalization helps. That's the same premise that operates many of today's support groups.

Why Practice: Of course, not every family can have the luxury of summer study because of finances, your summer schedule, your teacher's schedule etc. If that's the case, make the choice with acceptance of the following: 1) regular practice and motivation will be dependent on the age of the child, their playing ability and the child's or the parent's ability to set appropriate goals, 2) the quality and quantity of time spent practicing will diminish as the three months pass, and 3) reentry to lessons will be somewhat demoralizing as students will expect to return in the fall with the same skill level they had in the spring. Music, like athletics, is a physical skill and if you don't use it, you'll lose it. Twelve weeks without practice or lessons is one fourth of the year! It's hard to imagine that Bret Favre or Michael Jordan never pick up their balls to do any training in the off-season. On the contrary, it's during the off-season that they practice or hone the specific skills that need improving so that when they get to the games (which are *their* performances) they are competent and confident.

When to Practice: We tend to think of the summer as season of free time and change of pace. We do need that and it usually does improve our outlook and perspective, (I am a firm believer in allowing, even "scheduling" time just to be.), however, setting a schedule for some activities does give a sense of security to the students because they have the ability to, in a sense, predict the future. The most difficult part of practice is just getting started so it's recommended to get it done first thing after breakfast. Not only is this usually the coolest part of the day, but the time we are also the most rested. Practicing first thing will eliminate the resistance that often develops when children are already involved with their friends or some other activity they do not wish to stop. Despite our best intentions, practicing that is put off until later especially in the summer, is not likely to get done. Doing it in the morning allows one to partake of all those other spontaneous activities that offer themselves during the day, and what's more, you can partake of them guilt-free knowing that your practicing has been

accomplished! Another hint if your child is a string player is to consider leaving the instrument out of its case if it will be safe. Then when the child walks past it he or she just may be inclined to pick it up.

Where to Practice: While it may be best to have a set practice time, a change of pace can be effected by varying the location of practice at least for the string player and singer. Surprise your child by moving the practice session to the shade tree in the back yard, the patio or deck, or even a trip to the local park.

What to Practice: This is another area that can offer variety. The following is a list of possible goals/projects to keep practice interesting and motivation up during the summer. Remember, having a purpose is the key.

1. Find out dad's favorite piece and make a tape of it for him for Father's Day.
2. In honor of Flag Day, June 14 or Independence Day, July 4, learn by ear a patriotic song such as America the Beautiful, God Bless America, Yankee Doodle, Battle Hymn of the Republic.
3. Take a trip to the local music store and select a piece of sheet music to learn. (It's probably wise to have some input from your teacher so that you choose a selection that's appropriate for your level.)
4. Prepare a piece for grandma or grandpa. Call them up and play it over the phone.
5. Learn a duet part to a piece in the Suzuki repertoire
6. Visit a Suzuki friend and have your own marathon.
7. Transpose a piece to a new key or string
8. Prepare a recital for the neighborhood. Decide the repertoire, make programs, invitations and refreshments
9. July 25 marks six months until Christmas. Cool off by playing/singing a Christmas carol
10. Improvise your own variations on a piece you know
11. Play a major piece in minor or a minor piece in major
12. Practice or give a concert in the dark or by candlelight
13. Choose a piece that's rusty and make a tape recording of it. Practice it everyday for two weeks and then record it again. Compare the two recordings.
14. Review one piece from each book you can play
15. Choose a skill you have recently learned and apply it to earlier pieces
16. Give your parent a lesson
17. Review by classifications such as:
 - a. pieces by a particular composer

- b. pieces which contain a certain skill successive down bows, Alberti bass
 - c. pieces is a specific key or finger pattern
 - d. pieces that start with an upbeat or up bow
 - e. pieces that are legato
 - f. pieces that are staccato
 - g. pieces by type i.e. all folksongs, gavottes or minuets or bourrée (singers could do it by language)
 - h. pieces by period i.e. baroque, classical, romantic, contemporary
 - i. pieces that predominately use a certain string, octave or range, position
 - j. pieces by tempo markings i.e. Allegro, Andante, Allegretto, Moderato,
 - k. pieces that have repeats
 - l. pieces that have echoes
 - m. pieces by form ABA, ABBA, ABACADAetc.
 - n. pieces that have D.C. al fine
 - o. pieces with trills
 - p. pieces that have fermatas
 - q. pieces that have chords
18. Finally, begin your review for the Institute

Cap off the summer by attending the American Suzuki Institute on the UWSP campus. It is the oldest and largest institute outside of Japan and its format has been copied at the 60+ institutes that are offered at various locations each summer. If the bedrock of the Suzuki philosophy is providing a musical environment, you will find it here at its best. Students receive individual and group lessons each day, daily concerts, lectures for parents and generous doses of enthusiasm and motivation that will last well into the next year. Families form friendships with other families from other cities and states that last throughout their lifetimes. For one week it seems that everyone in the whole world plays an instrument and *loves* to practice. It's not hard to jump to that conclusion when one hears music wafting from every building on campus, from cars and campers in the parking lots and from under the shade trees. If your family plans or pocketbook won't allow attendance as a participant, at least experience the institute by attending the opening ceremonies and the many concerts offered during the weeks free of charge. Watch the August Stevens Point Journal for the listings of time and places.

Have a fun and musical summer!



Notes from the Endpin

By Lawrence Leviton

Congratulations and thanks to all of the participants in the Festival Concert and the Dean's Retirement Celebration. You played splendidly and did a wonderful job showcasing your talents and the beauty of the cello. Bravo! Also, congratulations again to **Jamie Davis** and **Emily Gruselle** who gave wonderful senior recitals last month. Emily and Jamie have been stalwart members of the cello studio for many years and I wish them well as they start their cello studies at UW-Madison in the fall. We'll also miss **Kiel Hausler** and **Ethan McKnight** who are also starting college in fall. Good luck to you all!

There are many great opportunities for cello study and exploration this summer. My summer schedule is out and I will look forward to seeing many of you as I begin teaching in the new Fine Arts building. I would also encourage you to sign up for Institute this summer. ASI is filling up fast so get your applications in! In June there is an exciting opportunity to participate in a different kind of cello playing, at the New Directions Cello Festival. You can read about it here:

<http://www.newdirectionscello.com/festival/fest05/index.html>

They will have workshops on jazz cello, improvisation, and much more and have a special set of events devoted to young people. I went two years ago and learned a lot about different approaches to cello playing.

Have a great summer!



Vocal News

Annie Tillotson, Kelly Tillotson, Michael LeGault, Anna Kasukonis,, Zara Markman, Hillary Anderson, Abbie Erdman, Tom Treder, and Roy Meyer participated in District WMTA March 19th. Kelly, Michael, Abbie and Roy will participate at the State level in May.

Michael LeGault, Roy Meyer, Karl Spaay, Shelia Lais, Melissa Zanolli, Allie Jagielo, Lisa Slattey, Hillary Anderson, Kate Leifheit, and Matt Leifheit participated in WSMA March 5th. Karl, Matt, Roy, Shelia, and Allie will participate in the State Festival in May.

Kayla Provisor, Shelia Lais and John Zach performed in the SPASH Musical *The Titanic* in February.

Roy Meyer received singer of the day in the Wood County 4H Festival of the Arts.

Matt Lefheit performed in the Marshfield Senior High production of *Anything Goes*.

Lisa Slattey will perform in the Lincoln High Musical *The Sound of Music*.

Congratulations to all of the students for their hard work and wonderful accomplishments this semester.

Student News

Emily Watson and Lawrence Andersen played in the Waupaca Festival Orchestra on Sunday, April. 10

Stacey Rolak auditioned for the Wisconsin Middle School Honors Orchestra and Band on April, 9.

Maddie DeBot played with the CWSO on April 16 & 17.

April 2005 Graduates

Richard Meilahn, Violin Twinkle
Michael Thimmesch, Piano Twinkle
James Smyth, Piano Book 3
Ann Marie Kosmoski, Violin Book 6
Philip Smyth, Violin Book 7
William Rosenthal, Piano Book 1
Soren Anderson, Piano Book 2
Christa Spieth, Violin Book 3
Luisa Marion, Violin Twinkle
Nate Hatton, Piano Book 2
Bryce Marion, Violin Book 3
Jonathan Karbowski, Violin Book 6

Upcoming Events

Saturday, May 14th, Solo & Ensemble Concert, 2:00 and 3:30 pm, Michelsen Hall

Saturday, May 14th, CSCO Concert, 7:30 pm, Michelsen Hall

Sunday, May 15th, Piano Festival Concert, 2:00 and 3:30 pm, Michelsen Hall.

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