

AMBASSADOR

Aber Suzuki Center

University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
College of Fine Arts and Communication

*Changing lives by providing the best in performance,
creativity, and expression*

November 2005

From the Director's Desk

By Dee Martz

One of the most often heard Suzuki sayings is "All Kids Have Talent." The famous American poet Maya Angelou goes a step further.

"All human beings are talented. Every person born is talented. I believe that. I believe that talent is like electricity. We don't understand it – *really*. We know it and we use it. We harness it sometimes, but we don't understand it. You can plug into electricity, keep a heart pump going, light up a cathedral or a synagogue...you can do wonderful things, or you can electrocute a person in a chair. Electricity makes no judgment. Electricity is simply there. It says "if you want to use me well, constructively, do so. If you want to abuse me, that is your business." Well, talent is like that. And every human being born *has talent*. And some of us are overwhelmed by the society in which we live or by our families or the condition of our birth, and, unfortunately, often by teachers who say that the talented are "the elite" and "you are not one of those." So people don't get a chance to hone this thing that is born to them *as surely as skin*."

Fortunately, in the Aber Suzuki Center we do have the opportunity to hone talents and to do it in a nurturing environment. As Thanksgiving approaches, take time to enjoy the process and to share the results.



what's inside
COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS AND COMMUNICATION
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN — STEVENS POINT 2005/2006



Making the Most of Auditions

By David Becker

Anyone who is involved in theater, dance or music, will almost certainly be faced with taking auditions. Auditions are the most common vehicle for selecting performers to fill positions. Whether trying out for a part in a school play or vying for entrance into a choir, band or orchestra (like the Wisconsin High School Honors groups), you can expect to go through the audition process.

I have taken dozens of auditions through the years for admission to schools, some music camps, orchestral jobs and teaching positions. There were successes and failures along the way but I always emerged from an audition experience feeling like I had learned how to do a better job preparing for the next audition opportunity.

Thorough Preparation

In order to be completely prepared for an audition one needs to find out what the requirements are and to start preparing well in advance of the actual date. Some auditions consist of nothing more than playing a solo or reciting a few lines of text, but others are far more elaborate. Musicians auditioning for the Wisconsin High School Honors Orchestra are required to perform a solo, scales with various bowings and rhythms, an etude and finally to do some sight reading. This is a lot of material to prepare to a high level and will likely take months of practice to really polish.

Ask your private teacher for help with fingerings and advice on stylistic playing of required excerpts or etudes. Preparing for an audition is not like cramming for a test. We might be able to drill a bunch of facts one day and spit them out on an exam the next day but it takes time to train muscles to negotiate new technical skills with ease and consistency. Furthermore, we want to go well beyond just barely playing the right notes in an audition.

Play in Time and in Tune

The ultimate goal is to prepare all audition material to the highest possible standard. Orchestral audition committees are always thinking, "How is this player going to fit into the section?" Metronome practice is essential to make sure tempos are steady and that there are no rushing or dragging tendencies. Good ensemble playing requires the ability to be perfectly in time and in tune with others. If just one person in a section has faulty intonation or is out of sync rhythmically it spoils the clarity of the group. It is helpful to record the audition material and listen to it as if one were sitting on the audition committee. It's easier to be truly objective about our playing and

what needs fixing when we hear a recording of ourselves than when we are actually involved in the playing process.

Detailed attention to dynamics, articulation, tone, musical phrasing and style is what often sets one person apart from the rest of the people auditioning. Audition committees frequently conclude that almost everyone played a solid audition but that a particular candidate just had that something extra that gave them the edge over the others.

Play Your Best in the Short Time You Have

Many auditions last for no more than five minutes if that long. In advertisements for professional orchestral positions you often see the following statement "The audition committee reserves the right to dismiss, immediately, any candidate not meeting the highest professional standards". The old "*I played it better at home*" refrain rings even more hollow where auditions are concerned. Candidates feel an added degree of pressure knowing the need to be perfectly composed from the beginning of an audition and to stay well focused throughout. The following are techniques that can be used to help with focus and to settle nerves.

1. Visualization

Shortly before an audition sit down and visualize the perfect performance of the audition material. It is often best to practice visualizing with your eyes closed. Hear the music in your head and let your body feel the sensations you would feel if you were actually playing your instrument.

2. Relaxation and Breathing Exercise

There are many ways of coping with performance anxiety and one of the most effective methods is to practice controlled breathing. Here's a quick and effective way to slow down that thumping heart beat and gain your composure.

- a. Inhale through the nose to a slow count of four (one count per second is a good pace) filling the bottom of the lungs first and then the top.
- b. Hold your breath for a count of seven.
- c. With the tip of your tongue right behind your upper teeth exhale slowly through the mouth to a count of eight emptying the bottom of your lungs first by contracting your stomach muscles.

Repeat this process for a total of three complete breaths. This procedure gets lots of oxygen to the brain and helps calm the entire body. Incidentally it is also an effective method for getting rid of tension headaches.

3. Play mock auditions

It is always a good idea to play a number of practice auditions. Perform for family members and friends to get used to the feeling of being "on the spot". There's nothing like a little added performance pressure to reveal the weak spots in the prepared material.

Practice Sight Reading

Many auditions require sight reading as part of the process. Although sight reading is literally playing something you have never seen before, it is possible to practice this skill. Begin with a book of easy to intermediate solos or etudes that you are not familiar with. If metronome speeds are provided in the music use those as the basis

for choosing the speed at which you will play. Otherwise you have to pick a tempo based on the indication at the beginning of the piece like andante (walking tempo), allegro (fast and lively), etc. Here's the drill for sight reading practice:

- a. Pick a passage to sight read. One or two lines at a time are plenty.
- b. First identify the time signature and key signature. Ask your teacher how you can figure out what key you are in simply by looking at the key signature. Knowing what key you are in and which scale pattern applies to that key will greatly facilitate your successful reading of a new piece. Really great sight readers are very comfortable playing scales and arpeggios in every key.
- c. Set a steady beat by tapping a foot or by turning on your metronome.
- d. With your instrument in rest position finger the notes on your fingerboard. Fit the rhythms into the steady beat and try to hear what the music will sound like when you really do start playing. Singers have to hear the intervals in their heads when doing this exercise. Once you have done this "virtual" playing of the piece in rest position it is time to actually play through it.

While it's nice to get all of the correct notes and rhythms when practicing sight reading it is an added bonus if you can also play the dynamics and articulations that are marked. The more we practice reading music like this, the easier it is to add more details to the music the first time we play it. Audition committees always give a candidate a moment to look over sight reading material so you can use the above-mentioned method during an actual audition.

Auditioning can be a bit daunting at times but it is a reality that most performers have to face at one time or another, so it's good to refine our auditioning skills and to prepare thoroughly to ensure the best results from every audition we take.



Watch Your Mail!!

Within the next couple of weeks you'll be receiving this year's Aber Suzuki Center student/family directory. Along with the directory you'll be receiving an Ambassador Survey. Please complete the survey and drop it in the payment box in the waiting room. Why bother? We want your feedback – AND – a random drawing of all responses will be held at the December Marathon. Five lucky winners will receive prizes donated by the American Suzuki Institute Store, valued at \$5 - \$10!! Return your completed Ambassador Survey by December 9th and you may be one of the lucky winners!



Notes From the Endpin

By Lawrence Leviton

Thank you to all of the parents and students who helped make Cello Day 2005 a success. A lot of time and effort went into Cello Day and your efforts helped to make it a very special day. Also, congratulations to all of the students who participated in the Day and the final concert. What a wonderful performance-bravo!



Roy Meyer Performs Solo with CWSO

By Kyoko Fuller

Roy is a junior in High School (Home School), and a Suzuki violin student for 12 years with Kyoko Fuller. He is considering majoring in music performance in college.

When he started to become more serious about his goals, he received several signs of confirmation that he was headed in the right direction. In 2004, he earned the honorable mention from the Concerto Competition of Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra, Madison. In 2003, he won honorable mention from The Central Wisconsin Symphony Orchestra, for which he became a member of the CWSO. This year Roy won First Place in the CWSO Young Artists Concerto Competition.

When Roy was born, his older brother Andy was in his third year of Suzuki violin and was practicing Book 5. In later years, when Roy started to learn Book 5, his ability to grasp music had a drastic change that his mother and I noticed especially when he began to learn the Vivaldi Concerto g minor, 3rd movement, in Book 5. Then his mother Judy realized that about the time of his birth, Roy was listening to the piece in her womb! His brother had been working on that piece. Roy must have been hearing it repeatedly; it was almost as if he was saying, "I already know it!" He took no more than two weeks to play it accurately.

Roy loves to play baseball and he enjoys watching professional baseball games frequently. Roy also studies voice in the Suzuki program. Last year he received first place at District and State Solo Ensemble and Honorable Mention at State WMTA.

Roy is very easy going and pleasant to be around. His approach to music is no different. His practicing has been very consistent for many years following Dr. Suzuki's command "do not rush, do not rest." He believes in hard work and discipline but with his good judgment, he limits and sorts out how many activities he should be involved in and still maintain the quality of what he does. That is wonderful and wise. Since he knows that music is his direction, he practices his violin routinely about 3 hours a day. Lately he is working to play his music with more passion and with clear interpretation. He graduated from Suzuki Violin Book 10 several years ago, now he is expanding his repertoire for college auditions and for his Senior recital for next year.

Roy would like to invite you for the delightful CWSO Holiday Concert December 3 & 4, Sentry Theater. As the winner of the competition,

he will perform Wieniawski Violin Concerto #2 third movement with the Symphony.

You do not want miss it!



Voila Viola

By Dee Martz

A few weeks ago I received a set of CDs of Rivka Golani performing the Bach Suites. My husband and I have collected at least ten recorded versions of some or all of the Bach Suites yet I was thrilled with the gift. As I started listening I was immediately struck by the elegant interpretation. The Prelude, found in Suzuki Viola Book 5, was light, quick and flowing. In fact I don't think that I had ever heard it performed so quickly but that didn't matter. Ms. Golani swept me into her version of the music.

When I put the Golani Bach CD on to inspire a student I was shocked to hear "That's not right. It's too fast. Besides the bowing isn't what is printed in my Suzuki Book." This inspired me to pull out six versions of the Prelude (violinists Golani, Fuchs, McCarty, Bicknell and cellists Casals and Starker) and play them one after the other for my college viola student studio class. The performers are all very highly developed artists so the performances were very well done yet they certainly were different. We compared the interpretations and even discovered that when the seven people listening were asked to pick their favorite, four different performances were selected!

Musical interpretations come from the hearts and from life experiences. The differences in expression add richness to our lives and can inspire the creative juices in all of us. *"Vive la différence!"*



Parent Education

The following Parent Education sessions will be held, 7:30 pm in NFAC 361. All Suzuki parents/guardians are welcome.

November 15 – "First, you gotta create da mood..."

December 13 – "Practicing: The Great Quest for Consistency without Boredom"

February 14 – "Note Reading 101: A Survival Manual for Parents"

April 11 – "The Art of Reviewing With a Purpose"



Faculty News

Pat D'Ercole attended a meeting of the teacher development committee of the Suzuki Association in Boulder, CO on October 21-23.

On October 8th, **Tom Yang** performed as a collaborative pianist with Sarah Porwoll, clarinetist, in a recital that included the Vaughan Williams' *Six Studies in English Folksong*, Witold Lutoslawski's *Dance Preludes*, and Ludwig Spohr's *Clarinet Concerto No. 3*.



Vocal News

Congratulations to **Brittany Holz** for attending State Honors Choir!!

Parents please check your calendars for upcoming events:

Marathon, November 12

Shelia Lais Voice Recital, November 19

Voice Recital, December 4

Marathon, December 9

Thought for the Day:

Practice, like brushing ones teeth, needs to be daily.

Imagine how well we would learn to talk, if as children we only heard talking sometimes. The same is true of learning to sing. We must listen everyday, not just sometimes.



Alumni News

Congratulations to Joel Fuller, violinist, who has been hired in the first violin section of the National Opera Orchestra at the Kennedy Center in Washington DC. Joel is the second Stevens Point native in the orchestra. Eric Lee, who studied with Margery Aber is the Associate Concertmaster. Joel is the son of Kyoko Fuller and studied with Pat D'Ercole.



Student News

Dolce Strings entertained the Wisconsin Music Teacher Association conference banquet at Michele's Restaurant on October 22nd.

Sheila Lais, a Senior at Spash, will present a voice recital Saturday, November 19th, 7:00 pm in NFAC 221. She will be assisted by Tom Yang, Piano, and Anton Schultz, Flute.

Shelia is an honor student at Spash. Her activities include, Secretary for the Senior class, Health Assistant at Spash, National Honor Society, Key Club, and Wisconsin Regional Team Institute Mentor. Outside of school, Shelia is a member of St Josephs Church choir and she works with Big Brother, Big Sisters.

Music for Shelia's program will include songs by Mozart, Strauss, Foster and Copland.

A reception will follow. All are invited!

Stacey Rolak, Hannah Buehler, Will Peck, Chris Peck and Will Mitchell participated in the All-State Middle School Honors Orchestra Concert at the Wisconsin School Music Teachers Association Conference in Madison on Saturday, October 29th.

Students from the Aber Suzuki Center performed with the Wisconsin High School Honors Orchestra when it presented a concert at the Overture Center in Madison for the Wisconsin School Music Teachers Association Conference on Thursday, October 27th. **Katherine Munck** played violin and served as the concertmaster for the orchestra, and **Quinn O'Reilly** played viola with the group.



October 2005 Graduates

Roshini Traynor, Violin Book 2

Navneeth Iyengar, Violin Book 5

Erik O'Reilly, Piano Book 2

Lauren Sheibley, Violin Book 4

Will Mitchell, Violin Book 6

Quinn O'Reilly, Viola Book 5

Adam Qutaishat, Viola Book 4

Jill Iwanski, Viola Book 4

Julida Kochanowski, Piano Book 3

Naomi Crump, Violin Book 3

Will Peck, Viola Book 5

Annie Yao, Violin Book 3

Alexa Haynes, Piano Twinkles



Upcoming Events

Saturday, November 12th, Marathon Saturday

Sunday, November 13th, Solo Recitals, 2:00 and 3:30 pm, NFAC Michelsen Hall

Saturday, December 10th, Marathon Saturday

Sunday, December 11th, Solo Recitals, 2:00 and 3:30 pm, NFAC Room 221

January 27-28, 2006, Chamber Music Weekend

Saturday, January 28th, Chamber Music Concert, 3:30 pm, NFAC Room 221