



AMBASSADOR

Aber Suzuki Center

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

November 2006

From the Director's Desk

By Dee Martz

Professor Pat's Excellent Adventure

Recently all of the families in Professor Pat's studio received the following letter. I thought that all of the ASC families would enjoy hearing about her plans. DM

This fall I am celebrating my 30th year of teaching music. It is a very gratifying profession for me and one that greatly enriches and fulfills my life. I passionately believe that all children should have the opportunity to study an instrument using the Suzuki philosophy and see it as a means of making this world a better place. That is why training teachers is as important to me as teaching your child. More Suzuki-trained teachers will mean that more children will have the possibility of learning to make music as well as developing sensitive human hearts.

I have come to the realization that I could be doing more to make the preparation of Suzuki teachers here at UWSP more effective as we strive to be one of the leading teacher training centers in the country. New strategies are being developed using videos and the web so that student teachers can better hone their skills by getting feedback more often. I have used some technology, but would like to learn to do so more

effectively and efficiently. Of course, I cannot expect to teach student teachers better without improving myself first.

The occasion to learn and grow in this very area presented itself this past year. I have been invited to work with Dr. Robert Duke, one of the foremost music education researchers in the country today, who employs many of these methods in teacher education. As a result, I will be taking a leave of absence this coming spring semester, January to May, 2007 to go to the University of Texas at Austin where he teaches.

During my absence, I have arranged for Jennifer Burton and Emily Watson to give lessons to your child(ren). We are very fortunate that my opportunity has coincided with Jenny's return to the Stevens Point area. Jenny received her Suzuki training here with Margery Aber. She is an experienced Suzuki teacher, an active clinician and a former ASC faculty member until her move to Dallas in 1993. Emily Watson is an outstanding violinist and completed her MMed in Suzuki teacher training with me in 2005.

More specific information will be forthcoming later in the semester. Some flexibility and creative scheduling will be required from all of us since we will need to work around Jenny's and Emily's schedules with their own students. However, every effort will be made to make this temporary substitution as easy as possible.

Thank you for bearing with me so that I can take advantage of this opportunity. I know that I will be eager to resume lessons with you in June. I hope to be an even better and more inspiring teacher when I return.

Sincerely,
Pat D'Ercole



Improvisation

By Dave Becker

The Harvard Dictionary of Music defines improvisation as, "The art of performing music spontaneously, without the aid of manuscript, sketches, or memory." The dictionary goes on to say, "...masters such as Bach, Handel, Mozart and Beethoven were as famous for their improvising as for their written compositions. Mozart frequently extemporized fugues or variations on a given theme."

Soloists in the 18th and 19th century often improvised cadenzas when performing a concerto. Modern day classically trained musicians have pretty much abandoned the practice of improvisation except for performers who specialize in performance of Baroque music and have been schooled in baroque ornamentation. But the art of improvisation still thrives today in the performance of jazz.

My own interest in jazz improvisation goes back to the late 1970's when I was a founding board member of the Saskatoon Jazz Society in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Although I didn't play jazz myself in those days I was an avid listener and supporter of those who were skilled in the

practice of jazz improvisation. Over the past 30 years I have worked on developing my own improvisational abilities and have learned a great deal by playing with musicians who are seasoned improvisers.

The more I play jazz the more I admire those who do it really well. Great jazz musicians have a broad and deep understanding of music theory and are capable of playing any piece they learn in every key. They have complete mastery over major, minor, whole tone, diminished, pentatonic, blues, bebop and modal scales as well as the chords that fit with each scale. Best of all they are able to draw upon this vast theoretical knowledge to produce lyrical melodies or dazzling technical licks at the drop of a hat.

Getting Started

A good way to get the improvisatory juices flowing is to take a melody that you know well and simply change the rhythm. Dr. Suzuki improvised on the theme of Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star to produce his famous Twinkle variations. Try playing the theme to Twinkle as it is written in the Suzuki book and then play it again with the same notes but different rhythms as in Example 1. You can play the same rhythm on every note or you can explore varied rhythms as in Example 2.

Once you have experimented with rhythms it is time to change some notes. A fundamental knowledge of scales and chords is essential for the improviser. Violinists learn Twinkle in the key of A major (violinists and cellists can try these exercises in D major, pianists in C major and singers in whatever key suits you). Play an A major scale and make a special note of the 1st, 3rd, 5th and 7th notes of the scale (A, C #, E and G#) since these are the notes of the A major 7th chord. Improvisers regard the notes of scales and chords as essential elements in their improvising "tool chest". Play the Twinkle theme

again but this time fill in the spots where skips occur between notes with notes from the A major scale. If there are no skips between the melody notes you can play scale tones that surround the melody note as in Example 3. Just play what sounds right to you.

Art Blakey, a famous jazz drummer, once said "Someone played a wrong note and jazz was born." Don't be afraid to make mistakes when improvising. Some of those "mistakes" may turn out to be the most inspired and freshest improvisatory ideas you come up with. Feel free to add some extra notes that aren't in the A major scale to make your improvised melody sound more jazzy as in Example 4. In addition to improvising melodies over the chord changes, jazz musicians are also fond of reharmonizing pieces with different chords as in Example 5.

When jazz musicians jam on a piece they usually begin by playing the melody followed by a number of improvised solos and finish with a return to the melody. This technique, commonly referred to as "melody in, melody out," is one way musicians communicate when to end a piece. Jazz musicians listen closely to each other and often imitate motifs or rhythms they hear others playing which lends a sense of cohesiveness and polish to a performance.

Method Books

There is an abundance of instructional material available for those who want to improve their improvising skills. For string players I recommend Jazz Philharmonic, written by Randy Sabien (a well-known jazz violinist from Hayward, WI) and Bob Phillips. This book contains 12 original tunes in different jazz styles with preparatory pages for each piece that give you the appropriate scales to practice along with rhythms you can apply to the scales. On the CD that accompanies the book Mr. Sabien and his combo perform the preparatory material and

tunes. By adjusting the speaker balance on your stereo you can tune out Mr. Sabien and solo along with the professional rhythm section on each track.

Patterns for Improvisation - From the Beginning by Frank Mantooth provides good basics for the budding improviser on any instrument. The Jamey Aebersold Jazz Series contains many books and CDs that offer instruction and the opportunity to play along with jazz combos. The Jazz Piano Book and The Jazz Theory Book, both by Mark Levine, are very comprehensive sources for jazz theory.

Listening

Listening to recordings is a critical element of Suzuki instruction and, likewise, there is no better way to develop an ear for good improvising than to listen to the masters of the art. Singers should get a hold of some Ella Fitzgerald or Mel Torme recordings that demonstrate their mastery of scat singing. Stephane Grappelli, Joe Venuti, Mark O'Connor and the Turtle Island String Quartet can provide inspiration and ideas for aspiring string players. Pianists like Oscar Peterson, Art Tatum and Bill Evans showcase the endless possibilities of keyboard improvisation. Also be sure to take advantage of some of the many live jazz performances that occur in our area throughout the year.

Creating your own melodies and harmonies on a favorite piece is an exhilarating and rewarding experience. I would encourage everyone to enjoy that sense of artistic freedom and to liberate the musical imagination through improvisation.



Example 1.



Example 2.



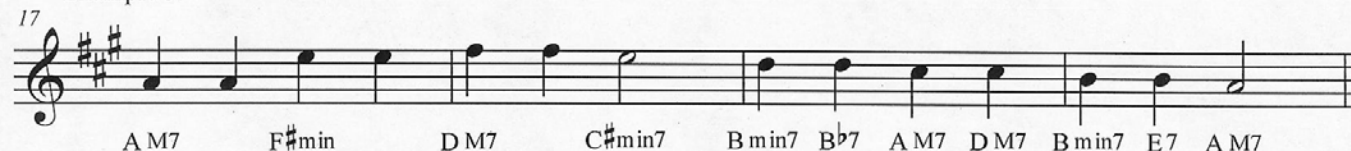
Example 3.



Example 4.



Example 5.



Suzuki Association of Wisconsin Sponsors Second Suzuki Weekend Retreat

Need a winter motivator? A break from the routine of Sunday football? The Suzuki Association of Wisconsin is hosting its second Suzuki weekend workshop for strings and piano Jan. 19-21, 2007 at the Inn on the Park Hotel in Madison. This will be like a mini-institute. The weekend will include group lessons taught by teachers from the state and the guest clinician will be Randi Kvam Hellman from Minnesota. There will be a piano recital at the Top of the Inn overlooking downtown Madison and a string festival concert in the Capitol rotunda. In addition, there will be a pizza party, an ice cream social, free tickets for children to the Madison Children's Museum and time for swimming. There will also

be a parent session given by Randi Hellman and plenty of time just to

share informally with other Suzuki parents. Private lessons are optional at a cost of \$20. Registration is \$80 for the first child and \$70 for siblings, however if you register by Nov. 15, the cost is \$65 for the first child and \$65 for siblings. A block of rooms have been reserved for workshop participants at approximately \$89. Parents must make their own hotel arrangements. See your teacher for your brochure.

Any student of any instrument and level may attend, however students ages 11-14 who are interested in chamber music need to know that our Aber Suzuki Center Chamber Music Weekend is scheduled for the same dates. If you are eligible for that experience you will have to

make a choice. Be sure to discuss this with your teacher to see which experience is the best for you.

By the way, there isn't any football scheduled at all for that weekend!



The American Suzuki Foundation

The American Suzuki Foundation is a charitable organization dedicated to supporting students participating in all Aber Suzuki Center (ASC) programs. It operates independently of ASC, but maintains close liaison with ASC faculty through the director, Dee Martz. Established in 1974, the Foundation was originally established to support undergraduate and graduate scholarships for Suzuki Method teacher-trainees at UW-SP. The initial trust amount of \$100,000 was raised primarily by Margery Aber, founder of what was originally called the American Suzuki Talent Education Center in Stevens Point.

Over the years, the goals of the Foundation have evolved to support more programs and students, but the central purpose has not changed. According to the articles of incorporation, the Foundation's purpose is to offer aide and assistance to the Aber Suzuki Center and the American Suzuki Institute. Today, the Foundation accomplishes this purpose by funding needs-based and children's scholarships (budgeted at \$10,700 annually), UWSP teacher-trainee scholarships (\$4000), American Suzuki Institute Teacher Training grants (\$5000), and workshops and studio enhancements for ASC faculty (\$3500). All giving by the Foundation is continually reviewed by the board of directors,

which consists primarily of parents with students who are or have been involved in the Suzuki Program. A scholarship committee within the board reviews all scholarship submissions and makes award recommendations to the board.

This annual giving is funded through two sources: interest from our investment accounts and the annual Music of the Masters fundraising event. Through additions to, and wise stewardship of, our investments over the years, the original amount of \$100,000 has grown to about \$384,000 today. The Music of the Master's fundraising event has raised \$6000 to \$8000 annually over recent years. The income from these two sources is what allows the board the flexibility to offer, and in many cases increase, scholarship awards to needy and deserving students of the Suzuki method.

Current members of the board include Tim Zander, President; Nancy Chinn, Vice President; Bill Jenkins, Treasurer; Sheila Banovetz, Secretary; Teri Jenkins; Brian Formella; Gretchen Anderson; Sara Oberthaler; Henry and Theresa Chao; and Karen Harms. Dee Martz, ASC Director, and Jeff Morin, Dean of the College of Fine Arts and Communication, are non-voting members.

For all Suzuki families, you should watch your mail for ASC student needs-based scholarship information in early November, and for Aber Children's Scholarship information in early February.



Voila Viola

By Dee Martz

<http://www.ashmontmusic.com/mccarty>

This is the site of internationally acclaimed violist Patricia McCarty. In addition to biographical information, discography and concert reviews she includes lots of extremely useful information. I recently re-read her FAQ section. Patty McCarty is full of very down to earth advice. I am going to include some questions and a just a bit of her response with the hope that you will be intrigued enough to go on line, find out something about this fabulous violist and her ideas.

How can I get a big sound? Three basic variable factors about the way you use your bow account for tone production....

How do I work a fast passage up to tempo? For clean fast passagework your practicing should include....

How can I memorize music more easily? The various ways in which we process the printed page and convert it to sound make for a fascinating lifetime study of talent, intelligence and acquired skill, and I believe....

How can I strengthen my left hand's 4th finger and stop my fingers from flying? Keeping the 4th finger aligned over its next notes and close to the strings is an issue

How can I overcome nervousness at auditions and concerts? At an audition or other anxiety-producing performance, you hope to be so intensely concentrating on creating your mind's aural image of the next few notes or musical gesture that any nervous anxiety about how well things will go, how past notes were played, or the outcome of the audition finds no

place in your consciousness. Easier said than done by all of us.....

If you would like to hear recordings of this fabulous violist I have several Patricia McCarty CDs in my lending library.



Faculty News

Jenni Yang presented an alumni clarinet recital on September 24. **Tom Yang**, Steve Bjella, Andrea Rosen and Amy Heitzman assisted. Works included the Khatchaturian Trio, Copland Concerto, an aria by Mozart and works for clarinet solo and duet.

Dee Martz was recently named to the UWSP Performing Arts Series Committee. This group recommends events for inclusion in the PAS.

Lawrence Leviton and Dee Martz attended the Wisconsin School Music Association Conference in Madison Wisconsin October 26-27.



Student News

Sarah Rosenthal presented her piano Book 1 recital at her home on November 5th.

Quinn O'Reilly (viola), **Sam Schenkman** and **Kelly Rolak** (violin) performed with the

Wisconsin High School Honors Orchestra on Thursday, October 26 at the Overture Center in Madison during the Wisconsin Music Educators Association (WSMA) convention. **Chris Droske**, an Aber Suzuki Center violist, played horn in the orchestra.

Lindsey Mocadlo and **Stacey Rolak** (violin) performed with the Middle School Honors Orchestra at the convention.

Selected on the basis of her performance at last May's State Solo/Ensemble festival, **Anna Luetmer** (viola) performed the 1st movement of J. C. Bach's Concerto in C minor for viola at the Exemplary Soloist Recital held at the Monona Terrace.

Emily Seegert participated in the WSMA Middle Level State Honors Choir auditions in Madison on October 28th.



October 2006 Graduates

Vivian Norman, Piano Twinkles
Mac Lucas, Piano Twinkles
Sarah Rosenthal, Piano Book 1
Abigail Scaffidi, Piano Book 1
Megan Siebert, Piano Twinkles



November 2006 Graduates

Olivia Heese, Voice Book 1
Jillian Jenkins, Piano Book 2
Victoria Tillotson, Voice Book 2
Gabriella Heese, Voice Book 1
Jonathan Cochran, Violin Book 4
Jake Kubisiak, Violin Book 8
Philip Smyth, Violin Book 8
Will Peck, Viola Book 6
Petrea Schedgick, Violin Book 6
Chris Peck, Cello Book 7
Maria Marchel, Violin Book 8
Mac DeBot, Violin Book 4
Antony Van Tiem, Violin Book 4
Dinesh Traynor, Violin Book 1
Rachel Ley, Violin Book 2
Christa Spieth, Violin Book 4
M. J. DeBot, Violin Book 2
Annie Yao, Violin Book 4



Openings for Piano and Viola

The Aber Suzuki Center currently has immediate openings for piano and viola students. For more information, please call the Suzuki Office at 715-346-3033.



Upcoming Events

Marathon Saturday

November 11, 2006
December 9, 2006
January 27, 2007
February 10, 2007
March 10, 2007
March 31, 2007 (Piano only)
April 28, 2007 (except piano)

Solo Recitals*

November 12, 2006
December 10, 2006 (NFAC 221)
January 28, 2007
February 11, 2007
March 11, 2007
April 1, 2007

Senior Recital

Ann Marie Kosmoski and
Lawrence Andersen (violin)
Saturday, November 18th
2:00 pm, NFAC 221

Lisa Slattery (voice)
3:00 pm, Saturday, December 2, 2006
NFAC 221

Chamber Music Weekend

January 19-20, 2007

String & Voice Festival Concert

April 29, 2007, 2:00 pm, Ben Franklin Jr. High

Solo & Ensemble Concert

May 12, 2007, 2:00 and 3:30 pm, Michelsen Hall

CSCO Concert

May 12, 2007, 7:00 pm, Michelsen Hall

Piano Festival Concert

May 13, 2007, 2:00 and 3:30 pm, Michelsen Hall

*Solo Recitals held in Michelsen Hall unless otherwise noted

Solo Recitals are at 2:00 and 3:30 pm
Marathon Saturdays are 9:00 – 12:00 pm (Piano 11:00 – 2:00)