

AMBASSADOR

Aber Suzuki Center

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

October 2006

From the Director's Desk

By Dee Martz

I was asked to be part of a panel presentation at the May 2006 Suzuki Association of the Americas biennial Conference. My assigned topic was the "extra-musical values" of music education. The panel presentation was included in the "Parents as Partners" portion of the conference. With that in mind it occurred to me that the Aber Suzuki Center parents might enjoy and profit from the information I prepared. DM

Every spring at the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point the senior music education students participate in a mock school board meeting. Their assignment is to convince the school board members that music is an essential part of education. Some music faculty members play the part of school board members who are focused on the bottom line, and know that something has to be cut to balance the budget—for example "frills like music." Other faculty members take the role of those who think that the best way to have high standardized test scores is to cut out the activities that take time away from the 3 Rs. The discussion at the mock school board meeting is always lively and at times contentious. What makes it so interesting is that the music education majors don't just speak from the heart or from personal experience; they spend many hours finding quotations from respected individuals that advocate music education and finding research that includes measurable effects of the study of music.

So, when I was asked to put together some ideas for this presentation, I contacted the string education students who were involved in this spring's presentation and asked them if they would share some of their findings with me. Much to my surprise

they sent hundreds of pages of information in support of the statements in their PowerPoint presentations.

First—four striking quotations:

"Music is a more potent instrument than any other for education, because rhythm and harmony find their way into the inward places of the soul." "I would teach children music, physics and philosophy: but most importantly music, for in the patterns of music and all the arts are the keys of learning."
PLATO

"Whoever has skill in music is of good temperament and fitted for all things. We must teach music in schools." MARTIN LUTHER

"Music is about communication, creativity, and cooperation, and by studying music in school students have the opportunity to build on these skills, enrich lives, and experience the world from a new perspective." PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON

The fourth and final quote is the most startling statement--

"Our society is committing cultural genocide. When the economy tightens and school budgets shrink, programs in music and the other arts are most often the first to be cut back or even totally eliminated from the curriculum. This deprives children of a unique opportunity to develop their creativity, learn self-discipline and teamwork, and increase their sense of self-worth. It strikes me as being supremely ironic that today; we still have to try to make the case that music is indispensable if the term 'educated' is to mean anything. MICHAEL GREEN, PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF RECORDING ARTS AND SCIENCES.

Ironic or not, the truth is that at this time in our country we do have to convince people of the value of studying music. Here are few of the basic findings from dissertations and peer reviewed research.

“There is a causal link between music and spatial intelligence—that is the ability to perceive the world accurately and to form mental pictures. This kind of thinking is essential in everything from solving advanced mathematical problems to being able to pack a book bag with everything that will be needed that day.”

“In music, a mistake is a mistake. Through music study, students learn the value of sustained effort to achieve excellence and the concrete rewards of hard work.”

“Music students out-perform non-music students on achievement tests in reading and math. This finding was consistent for students of all socioeconomic backgrounds.”

“Skills such as reading, anticipating, memory, listening, forecasting, recall and concentration are developed in musical performance, and these skills are also valuable to students in math, reading and science.”

“The word is out. Educational researchers have discovered a way to make kids smarter. There is a growing body of research that indicates that music instruction at an early age wires the brain differently for learning. Early music training helps develop brain areas involved in language and reasoning. The research highlights that the cognitive and academic improvements come about only with sequential instruction provided by qualified teachers and not through mere exposure to music.”

As I relate the research in early childhood development, in general and specifically in music study, to the reality of Suzuki based music study I am struck by the many articles that support the importance of the major tenants of the Suzuki approach—mainly the importance of the early beginning, of the home environment and of parent involvement.

It is my experience that in their Suzuki based music study students develop many skills that are transferable to other areas of life. For example:

* Students learn to isolate problems and to solve these problems by breaking things down into small parts--- methodically mastering each skill.

*Students develop coordination and fine-motor skills

* Students build concentration and mental discipline. With all music played from memory in Suzuki based study, students develop terrific aural learning skills and memory.

* Students develop perseverance—with repetition and refinement it takes many weeks of study to play that first open string with good tone, many months of study to learn to play Twinkle and many years of study to learn to play Mozart.

*Students understand what it really means to strive for excellence. Music in Book 1 is reviewed many times over many years so that constantly improved standards of tone production, of intonation and of expression are applied.

* Students develop joy in learning.

In Suzuki based music education there is a strong emphasis on creating an environment with individualized and sequential steps designed to guarantee a series of small successes. Each new skill creates a feeling within of “I can do this.” The child's self esteem and self confidence are nurtured from the beginning.

As I mentioned, the music education students sent hundreds of pages of material from which I have culled just a few ideas. One interesting tidbit from my undergraduate cultural anthropology class --- every society that has ever been studied has some form of music. While there are many extra musical benefits to studying music, I believe that it is important to recognize that above all music allows us to express thoughts and feelings and it is an essential part of the human experience.



Reflection: From the Annals of Time

By Kyoko Fuller

One day last summer, I was organizing our annex, which was piled up with various stuff accumulated over many years, and I bumped into a dusty old box containing a stack of Japanese Suzuki journals. As I started to peruse them, I soon became absorbed and completely distracted from the work I came in to do. In one of the magazines was an interview by the editor, Kenko Aoki, in Matsumoto, Japan, dated Fall 1972. The person being interviewed was none other than myself. As it happened, he was asking me to report on how the Suzuki movement was developing in America, including the kinds of events and accomplishments were occurring during the three years I was in USA teaching. As I was reading this again 34 years later, what really struck me first was the serious style of the Japanese language I was using and how strange it sounds now. I cannot even remember speaking like that! But as I continued to read, what came rushing back was the seriousness of our expectations at that time as we witnessed the earliest steps in the emergence of the Suzuki movement in America. And one of the thrilling developments that I was talking about with this editor was American Suzuki Institute and the wonderful work of its founder, Margery Aber. How could I know then that my path would eventually bring me to Stevens Point, Wisconsin!

Before being sent to USA, I taught in Matsumoto under the close direction of Dr. Suzuki. Then I came to America for the pioneer work at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, to work with music professor, William Starr, who later became the first president of Suzuki Association of America and is the author of many Suzuki books and university music theory textbooks. How this happened was that Mr. Starr with his wife and eight children went to Japan to study with Dr. Suzuki for a full year and then returned home with vast amounts of information on the Suzuki movement, including movies, pictures and recordings. But his biggest surprise was to bring to the USA two Japanese teachers from Matsumoto, Hiroko Driver and myself. That was in the Fall of 1969. It was then that we and the Suzuki parents started to walk the journey of Suzuki education together with tremendous expectation. The Suzuki students studying in the UT program eagerly embraced the Suzuki method and made

great improvements. There was a special sense of bonding to Dr. Suzuki through the presence of the Japanese teachers. (Hiroko later became director of the UT program.)

In the summer of 1971, our UT Suzuki students were invited to tour in Venezuela and their excellent playing was well received. The following summer, we took about twenty students to do a demonstration before the National Convention of American Music Teacher Association in Atlanta, Georgia. What a response we got!! We were strongly encouraged to tour the country just like Japanese groups were coming to the USA every year for touring since 1964. We also organized students to play at the state annual festival concert in Knoxville and three hundred Suzuki students gathered in the campus that first year. There were some from as far away as Kentucky and Ohio. I remember how my boyfriend (now my husband!) was amazed to see how this concert came together and was held without any rehearsal. I gave him a book *Nurtured by Love*. After he read it, he said that my teacher, Dr. Suzuki was a genius. I thought his observation was accurate!

From 1972-1982, I was on a long sabbatical from teaching as I followed my husband's mission work and raised a family of four children. I joined SAA in 1984 when I came to Stevens Point. It was a long time being away and a lot had changed!

I was pleased to find how much SAA had spread the Suzuki method. In many ways the SAA as an organization is much more helpful to hold American Suzuki teachers together than its Japanese counterpart. The teacher trainee courses were developed and made available all over the country in the summer institutes, workshops, teaching pedagogy classes at the university and private Suzuki schools by the SAA authorized trainers for the up and coming young teachers. The SAA also gives a National Convention and the Leadership Conference alternatively every other year which addresses the significant topics and important issues for us to focus on. The organization has been careful to guard and develop our expertise in ways that encourage and help teachers to grow together. The last SAA conference was geared to the celebration of the person of Dr. Suzuki and his legacy. At that time, many inspired stories were

shared by so many who had memorable personal stories about Dr. Suzuki.

In my own walk in the USA as a Suzuki mother and teacher for 24 years, there were many challenges as to how I should convey the method in the rapidly changing culture of America. This was especially true in the area of expectation of outcomes and in the value of children's education. And with parents, the relationship between child and parents and teachers (adults) is not as clear as it once was. This has created uncertainty in the expectations of the different roles and this has made it much more difficult for children and parents to make long-term commitment to music. We continue to believe in the wonderful potential for children to develop their talent, but creating the environment in our chaotic culture is more challenging by far than it was when I first came to America.

Imagine seeing and hearing two hundred 6 or 7 year-old students all playing the Violin Double Concerto (book 4 and 5) powerfully with perfect unity! Imagine watching the stage full of students playing Mozart/Kreisler, Rondo (beyond book 10) with lively Allegro tempo routinely. I remember that I practiced that piece to join them and what fun it was! Imagine the 6 – 8 year old piano students that were performing Mozart Turkish March (book 7) with delicate delivery and powerful dynamics with little fingers! I used to cry hearing them! How about Cello students? They were about ten years old or so playing the deeply emotional Elegy by Elgar together in unison with gorgeous deep tone and expression! Their minds and emotions were so focused on such a level of music and it was absolutely phenomenal. This was the kind of playing that renowned Cellist, Pablo Casals saw in the huge gathering at the National Suzuki Grand Concert (Zenkoku Taikai) in Tokyo. And when he heard the music from these children, he hugged Dr. Suzuki and cried out to say "Perhaps the music would save the world!"

These kids and these parents were not especially competitive or driven to succeed, but were single minded and kept their life focused on developing their abilities. They were able to celebrate every single step of progress, and with many steps to reach, they kept the pace of the steps moving fast! I do not know too much about what is going on in Japan today, but in 1997, I was struck by observing the amazing level of Suzuki Cello performance from

Nagoya, Japan. I remember I was so humbled and realized that I had forgotten what marvelous ability a child holds. Interestingly, as I was writing this article, I received a CD recording from my old Suzuki friend, Minoru Sugiyama, from Osaka, whom I have not seen since I left Matsumoto. It was actually from his wife, because, sadly, he passed away few months ago. The CD was the performance of the Suzuki youth orchestra (the middle school and the high-High school students) conducted by him. This recording is spectacular and sounds just like one of the top chamber music groups of the world. I am not at all exaggerating.

I would like to express my strong belief in conclusion that all the children of the Aber Suzuki Center have the same amazing ability as well as Japanese Suzuki children have shown and they are eagerly waiting to be educated. With many steps of development each day, no one will question the child's motivation, but will wholeheartedly guide them to experience satisfying progress with great expectation. The child will shout with joy "I can!" at each small step of progress. Let's guide them without missing their beat to grow. Have an exciting year!



New Parent Orientation

Parent Orientation will be held on Sunday, November 12, 2006 at 7:00 pm in NFAC Room 221 for parents of families new to the Aber Suzuki Center. The orientation session will consist of faculty introductions followed by short talks on the Suzuki philosophy, parent roles and responsibilities, benefits beyond music, ASC offerings, and the history of Suzuki in Stevens Point. A Q&A session will follow the talks. The evening will wrap up with a chance to mingle with other new parents and the ASC faculty over coffee and cookies in NFAC 144.



Mozart in Stevens Point



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, aka Bernie Smyth, greeted guests at Music of the Masters in the Noel Fine Arts Center on October 7th. He enjoyed speaking with students, parents, faculty, staff and friends of the Aber Suzuki Center and was pleased to hear performances of his own compositions. While it appeared that he did not get quite the same satisfaction from listening to pieces written by others, he was

very impressed by the preparation of the young musicians. Wolfie grew up in a family where his father was his teacher and his practice partner. He was surrounded by music all day long as his father was a fine violinist and his older sister Nanerl was an accomplished pianist. In the Mozart family, as is the case in many Suzuki families, the younger sibling learned more quickly so perhaps this is one explanation for the extraordinary musicianship of young Wolfgang.

The Aber Suzuki Center wishes to thank Mozart and all the Aber Suzuki Center musicians who made this evening such a big success. Also, special thanks to the members of the American Suzuki Foundation Board of Directors who planned the event, including the silent auction, to raise money for needs based scholarships. A more detailed report will be included in the November Ambassador.



Ann Marie Kosmoski and Lawrence Andersen Present Joint Senior Recital

Ann Marie Kosmoski and Lawrence Andersen will present a joint senior recital on Saturday, November 18 at 2:00 pm in NFAC 221. All ASC families are invited to attend.

The program will include repertoire from the Suzuki literature as well as other well-known violin literature and also some jazz and blues. Ann Marie will perform *La Folia* by Corelli, *Czardas* by Monti and Gounod's *Ave Maria* accompanied by her father on guitar. She and her father will also play *Latin Doll* by Randy Sabien. Lawrence will perform Kreisler's *Tempo di Menuetto*, *Tambourin* by Gretry and the Accolay *Concerto*. He will also demonstrate his improvisation skills on *Long, Long Ago*. The program will conclude with *Fantomen* by Ost/McClean, an upbeat duet with a little twinge of bluegrass. Tom Yang will be the collaborative pianist for both performers.

Lawrence Andersen started violin at age 4 with Pat D'Ercole. He has been a member of the SPASH Orchestra, the SPASH Chamber Orchestra and the Central State Chamber Orchestra. He enjoys playing for musicals and has played in the pit for SPASH's productions of *Titanic* and *Cats* and the Central WI Community Theatre's productions of *Bye, Bye, Birdie* and *Mame*. For the past 3 years he has also been a member of the Waupaca Arts Festival Orchestra. Lawrence enjoys and is interested in all types of music from rock to metal to jazz to classical and has his own band. He currently studies jazz and improvisation with Randy Sabien and has taught himself to play the mandolin, guitar and harmonica.

Ann Marie Kosmoski also began her study of the violin at age 4 with Pat D'Ercole. Her ensemble credits include the Northland Lutheran High School Band and Wisconsin Rapids High School Orchestra where she is currently concertmistress. She has participated in district and state solo and ensemble festivals and has played in the pit for the Lincoln HS production of *Oklahoma*. Ann Marie's many interests and activities include student council, cheerleading, figure skating and dance. She has won the Badger State Senior gold medal for skating and is currently an ice skating coach. In 2002 she was accepted into the Milwaukee Ballet's 3 week

summer intensive program. Ann Marie hopes to attend UWSP next year and would like to be a physical therapist.

Please join Ann Marie and Lawrence for a delightful afternoon of music. A reception will follow.



Faculty News

Pat D'Ercole was teacher trainer at the Intermountain Suzuki Institute in Sandy, UT, the Chicago Suzuki Institute and the American Suzuki Institute. She also presented a lecture at the Suzuki Association of the Americas conference on May 26 in Minneapolis entitled, "If You Want To Play Like An Artist, You Must Teach Like A Scientist"

Dee Martz attended the Suzuki Association of the Americas Conference in Minneapolis, May 25-29 where she was a member of a panel that presented basic information for parents about the Suzuki approach. June 15-24, Dee Martz presented a 10 hour course for teachers and work with students at the Intermountain Suzuki Institute in Salt Lake City, Utah. While in Utah she performed Debussy: Golliwog's Cakewalk as arranged for viola ensemble by Betsy Stuen-Walker. Mrs. Martz also taught at the Chicago Suzuki Institute July 1-7.

Dee Martz continues her work at Secretary on the Board of Directors of the Suzuki Association of the Americas. Most recently she attended the fall meeting September 14-17 in Ithaca, NY.



Student News

The cover of the new Suzuki Association of the Americas 2006 Membership Directory was designed by one of our ASC students, **Jonathan Cochrane**. For the past 3 years he has submitted artwork to the SAA for the Institute Mini Journal cover and has won

both third and second place. This year, however, the SAA staff decided to use it for the membership directory. Congratulations Johnathan!

Maria, Teresita and Christina Marchel, Emily Spaid and Jason Smith participated in the Fiddle Contest at Laura Ingalls Wilder Days in Pepin, WI on Sat., Sept. 9, 2006. Maria placed 2nd in the teen division and Teresita took 3rd in the 12 and under age category. Jason Smith also played at the Marshfield Fair and took 2nd place.

The following students played at the Parade of Gardens on July 14th: **Maleah Zinda, Elisa Prebble, Rachel Ley, Anjali Iyengar, Dinesh Traynor, Roshini Traynor, Jason Smith and Sarah Harmon.**

Roy Meyer, violin student of ASC was selected to be one of the recipients for the Four Year College Full Tuition Scholarship by the University of Wisconsin-Madison through its Summer Music Camp. He has a whole year to seek many other options to determine his choice. But what a wonderful option for him to study free in such a great college!

On September 8th, **Gretchen Sands** played with a small chamber group that performed the National Anthem at the Twins baseball game in Minneapolis.



Alumni News

ASC alumni **Tyson Bittrich** and his band, the La Crosse Hot Club performed on Wisconsin Public Radio's Higher Ground with Jonathan Overby on Saturday, August 19th, 2006. Tyson founded the gypsy swing band and plays violin and sings. Go to WPR's webpage and search the archives to hear his performance.



September 2006 Graduates

Trenton Seegert, Cello Book 1
Natalie Van Tiem, Cello Book 1
Roshini Traynor, Violin Book 4
Sam Schenkman, Violin Book 7
Katie Young, Violin Twinkles



October 2006 Graduates

Brian Turner, Violin Book 3
Maggie Medo, Violin Book 3
Claire Oberthaler, Violin Book 1
Jonathan Karbowski, Violin Book 7
Gretchen Sands, Violin Book 7
Anna Luetmer, Viola Book 5
Hannah Buehler, Viola Book 4
Quinn O'Reilly, Violin Book 8
Allison Patchett, Violin Book 9
Anjali Iyengar, Violin Book 2
Ashley Hoerter, Voice Book 1
Katie Hoerter, Voice Book 1
Elena McDermott, Voice Book 1
Equasia Schedgick, Voice Book 1
Gloria Schedgick, Voice Book 2
Katherine Erdman, Voice Book 2
Victoria Erdman, Voice Book 1
Vivian Norman, Piano Twinkles
Ted Irons, Piano Twinkles
Brynn Beversdorf, Violin Twinkles



ABER SUZUKI CENTER 2006-2007 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Marathon Saturday

September 16, 2006

October 7, 2006

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*

September 17, 2006

October 8, 2006

November 12, 2006

December 10, 2006 (NFAC 221)

January 28, 2007

February 11, 2007

March 11, 2007

April 1, 2007

Piano Halloween Recital

October 28, 2006, 11:00 and 12:30, Michelsen Hall

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)