

AMBASSADOR

Aber Suzuki Center

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

April 2007

From the Director's Desk

By Dee Martz

As most of you already know, Lawrence Leviton has resigned from the Suzuki portion of his contract at UWSP to pursue other career opportunities. No doubt our paths will continue to cross with Dr. Leviton as he will have a studio on the third floor of the Noel Fine Arts Center in which to continue his work in the UWSP Music Department.

Because the last open faculty position in the Suzuki area happened in 1999 when we added a piano position most of you do not know how we go about finding a new faculty member. As part of the Wisconsin State University System there are myriad requirements (a whole page divided into four phases with a total of 32 instructions) that we must meet. Our goal is to get to the point of interviewing candidates before the end of the semester and we are making progress toward that end.

The Search Committee consists Dave Becker, Tom Yang (both volunteered!) and myself. The entire faculty will be involved in the interview process and in determining which candidate best matches our needs. Of course your opinions matter so ASC students and parents will be invited to attend portions of the interviews and to give feedback about the candidates.

Even though I am sorry to see the long association with Lawrence Leviton come to an end, his resignation does provide a wonderful opportunity to the ASC. I am excited to announce that with the change in personnel the cello position will move from a 50% appointment to fulltime.

Please feel free to ask questions if you would like to know more about the Search and Screen process or our progress toward filling the position.



The Mechanical Music Master

By Tom Yang

Sometime around 1812, a mechanic named Dietrich Winkel devised a musical time-keeping device that we would recognize today as a pendulum-style metronome. The inventor made the mistake of showing it to Johannes Maelzel who made his own version of the mechanical timekeeper and patented it, thus linking his name to the invention of the metronome (and perhaps added meaning to the phrase *Tempo rubato!*). The notation M.M. – an abbreviation for Maelzel Metronome – can be found in musical scores used today.

One of Maelzel's friends was Ludwig van Beethoven, who, perhaps motivated by the possibility of exercising precise compositional control on performance tempi, used metronome markings in a number of his works. Some of Beethoven's tempo markings seem to indicate that this may not have been the best way for him to convey the tempo of a piece. A famous example of a Beethoven metronome marking gone awry is his tempo indication (half note = 138) in the first movement of the "Hammerklavier Sonata" (Opus 106). This tempo has been deemed

unplayable in almost every quarter. Composers since Beethoven have employed metronome markings in their compositions, but performers have in general viewed these markings as suggestions. The fact is that the M.M. indications have not replaced the traditional, more descriptive (and more musical) Italian tempo markings (Largo, Adagio, Andante, Moderato, Allegro and Presto).

While the metronome may not have had a major impact from a composer's standpoint, it has been a very valuable tool for a performer. The metronome can be a very effective coach, helping a student in every phase of practicing a piece, from learning the notes, to developing control and mastery, to preparing for performance. Further, a metronome gives the student private feedback, without judgment and with a sense of safety. It is a tool that can help a student learn on his own.

Buying a metronome

Before buying a metronome, consult your teacher. She can best determine whether your student is ready to use it. Your teacher may also have recommendations for metronomes that she feels to be most helpful for your student. A good, basic metronome can be usually purchased for less than fifty dollars. Metronomes come in basically two flavors, the pendulum style (which you have to wind) and the electric or electronic versions. The numerical markings on a metronome correspond to beats per minute. For example, setting a metronome to 60 means that it will click 60 times a minute (or one per second), setting a metronome to 120 means 120 clicks a minute (or two per second), etc. When purchasing a metronome, make sure that it is accurate, that it beats evenly (pendulum style metronomes can be uneven if not set on a level surface), that it is easy to hear and easy to set. Some digital metronomes require that you hold the button that adjusts tempo until it reaches the desired setting. For big tempo changes, this can be a nuisance. For battery-powered metronomes, check the type of battery required, the cost of replacing it and the frequency that the battery (or batteries) needs to be replaced. I personally like loud metronomes, as it can be difficult to hear the clicks while you are playing. Testing a metronome for accuracy is like taking a pulse. Count the clicks for 15 seconds (a quarter minute) and multiply the

number of clicks by 4. If the result matches the metronome's setting, it is accurate for that speed. Do this for several settings.

Learning to use a metronome

Playing with a metronome is about falling in with the pulse that it establishes. It should happen naturally. Hence admonitions to "concentrate," "listen carefully" or any other well-intended instruction can get in the way. Start by setting the metronome to a moderate pace, somewhere between 60 and 80 beats per minute and have your student step or clap with the beat. To help the student fall in with the beat, clap along with the student and let his clapping fall in with yours. When this is comfortable, try it at different speeds to see if he can adjust. As the student becomes more confident set the metronome to a slower speed and clap twice for every beat. The parent does not need to explain any of this to the child, just clap twice for every click and let your child fall in with you. Clapping the rhythms of the Twinkle Variations can be tried as the student advances. Again this should all be done with a minimum amount of instruction.

Once you've established that your student can clap with a metronome, have him play his instrument with it. The student should be comfortable with the piece because the goal here is not to use the metronome to learn the piece, but rather to experience falling into the beat set by the metronome. The piece should be pretty lively with a steady stream of notes. Twinkle Variations A and C would work well.

Using a metronome to learn a piece

To me, the turning point in learning a piece is when the student can play a piece without stopping and with all the rhythmic details. It doesn't matter how slow the tempo is, if you can do this, the piece is yours. You now have something to practice. As Suzuki might put it, you now have knowledge; all you need is 10,000 repetitions to convert it into a skill. The framework is done; increasing speed, playing more beautifully and easily can now be comfortably placed on a rhythmically solid framework. Do not underestimate what has been accomplished; the ability to place every note at a very slow tempo is a significant moment in learning a piece of music. The metronome can help you get there because it enables you to play at a very slow tempo without getting lost.

It also helps your student understand that there is a timeline for every physical action that he undertakes.

When a student has become familiar with the piece through listening and can play the notes of a piece or a section of a piece, a metronome can be very useful in constructing the rhythmic framework mentioned above. Learning a passage involves timing – preparing and placing the notes at the right time. Use the metronome to help your student locate a place for every note. To do this, set the metronome to match the fastest note value in the piece. If sixteenth notes are the fastest, the metronome should click 1 time per sixteenth, 2 times per eighth and 4 times per quarter. At this stage, every note in the piece should have at least 1 click. By setting a metronome to a speed that will click on the smallest note value, the player will become aware of all the rhythmic details in a piece, that is he will know where every note belongs and not merely approximate their placement (this exercise works particularly well for dotted rhythms). Working rhythm at this level of detail actually helps continuity and flow. Because we are precise about where we place every rhythmic event, the stream of rhythmic events is unfettered by inaccuracies. Further, because the clicks teach us that there is an underlying rhythm even within long notes, we learn that there is time to prepare for the next note, improving the continuity. Even tone quality is improved with the use of metronome, because good tone is dependent on proper preparation, which requires knowing *when* to prepare.

Using a metronome to master a piece

If practicing is about creating a sense of ease and familiarity, the metronome is a very valuable tool to use. A student really knows a piece if he can play it not at one tempo but at a range of tempi. If the student cannot play the piece at different speeds, he doesn't really understand the rhythm. Time in music is realized in how the note lengths relate to each other, not how many milliseconds they last. Practicing at a range of tempi helps the student understand this because by playing at different tempi, the player is not locked into the way his muscles feel or the actual length of the notes – all he has to go on is how the notes relate to each other. A metronome helps a student to play a range of tempi by keeping him out of the “tempo ruts” that might develop if

practice tempi were left up to the student's natural inclinations.

A metronome helps a musician develop ease in his playing by giving him the opportunity to increase the speed of successive repetitions very gradually. With the aid of a metronome a student can quickly increase the tempo of his repetitions by 50 percent in barely perceptible increments. By using “tempo bracketing” a student can bring pieces up in tempo and experience what it means to play easily. For example if a goal speed is 120 beats a minute, a student may start with a practice range between 80 and 108 (that is comfortably under the goal speed). The 80 may feel too slow and the 108 on the outside edge of comfort, but as we move the brackets (i.e. the lower and upper settings of the range), the upper part of the range will eventually become the middle part of the range and the middle part of the range will become the lower part of the range. The next day the range may be 84-112 and the day after, 88-116. The goal speed will eventually be in the upper end of the range and finally, as the brackets continue to shift upward, in the middle or comfortable part of the range of speeds. Bracketing allows the student to start a practice session well below the ending tempo of the previous day, it gives a student a sense of what is comfortable and what is not comfortable, and it has a built in series of repetitions where progress can be easily seen.

Metronomes provide metrics that allow the musician to see the results of practice. For example, 120 to the quarter may have seemed impossible last week, doable this week and easy next week. You can also use it to set goals. For a passage being learned, a musician may plan to have 80 to the quarter to be comfortably in his practice bracket by Wednesday, 88 on Thursday and 96 on Friday. Like a good coach, a metronome can help a student to manage his practice sessions.

Using the metronome to prepare for performance

There are days when you play a piece and it feels just right. You wonder how you can get into that groove again. The metronome can “book mark” the tempo of a successful performance to help you find the groove later. Some tempi are elusive – by book marking the tempo; you can practice finding the book marked tempo in certain places of the piece, then check your

success by using the metronome to see how close you came to finding it.

The metronome and playing expressively

One does not usually think of the metronome as having any contribution to expressive playing. A common objection to using the metronome is that it can lead to mechanical playing. Playing mechanically is a result of *not* working on pacing, *not* listening and *not* understanding arrival points. It is not a result of working extensively with a metronome to develop a steady beat. The strong sense of pulse that can come by working with a metronome is very important for developing rhythmic flexibility because all musical tempo fluctuations indirectly reference a steady beat. Without acknowledging this beat any changes in pulse would be chaotic. A ritardando or accelerando will only work within the context of a clearly established pulse, working to develop a solid pulse in your playing can only enhance expressiveness, not detract from it.

Just use it

If your teacher thinks that you can benefit from using a metronome, learn to use it – you'll be getting a tireless and occasionally annoying mechanical coach that will run with you until its spring or batteries give out, and as with many good coaches, it can put you on the road to practice sessions of self-discovery and independence.



A Message from Lawrence Leviton

Dear Aber Suzuki Center Students and Families,

I'm going to be leaving my position at the Aber Suzuki Center in the fall. Some of you know that I've taken this year to explore some career opportunities and that I have been spending a part of my week in Madison. I've decided to make some of these changes more permanent and will continue to expand some of the work that I've done in Madison this past year.

This decision has not been an easy one; I cherish all of the relationships that I have developed with my cello students and their families and I have come to

know many of the rest of you as well; I've enjoyed hearing you in recitals, had fun sharing cookies at marathons, and have appreciated watching you grown into fine musicians and people.

I'll still be involved in Music Department activities upstairs, so I'll look forward to hearing about your future successes and accomplishments.

Good luck on your studies and..... keep practicing!
Lawrence Leviton



Gender & Motivation During the Teen Years

By Carolyn Rundell

As our students move on into middle school, schedules become crowded with sports, clubs, homework, and friends. As parents and teachers, how can we keep music a priority in their increasingly busy lives? By understanding how gender affects behavior in teenagers, we can create an environment that builds motivation and the desire to learn. It is important to understand that these guidelines are generalizations, and as teachers and parents we must account for unique individual differences in all children.

Peers are important to both sexes: As kids develop into teenagers, peers become of high importance. Peers become the preferred motivator above parents. Close relationships with musical peers solidifies a teenager's identity as a "musician". As a result, teens will be motivated in order to live up that image. The desire to seek social recognition within the group will motivate a teen to practice and perform. As with any social clique, a "pecking order" exists, and teens are well aware of where they stand in comparison to each other. Competition to maintain or move up in the, "pecking order" will motivate teenagers to practice and strive to be the best musicians they are capable of being. Often times within a group, the teenagers' excitement and motivation rubs off on each other and can create a special atmosphere for learning. As parents and teachers, our job is to ensure that the competition remains a positive source

of motivation and each child recognizes their own talents and abilities.

Boys respond to visual images: Boys typically excel at spatial visual tasks and respond well when there is a visual cue. Boys will benefit with visuals such as videos and live performances. Internet sites such as www.youtube.com and www.cello.org provide free videos of great artists' performances. Video taping lessons can be beneficial for boys to go back and visually see as well as hear what was presented to them at their lesson.

Girls and Boys respond to stress differently: In every mammal species studied, research has shown that girls and boys respond to stress differently. Stress enhances learning in males, although the same stress can impair learning in females. External events, such as a recital, audition, or concert can be a strong motivator for practice in boys. Girls will experience these musical events as well, although they may require some additional coaching on stress relief and performance anxiety.

Boys seek competition whereas girls seek cooperation: Competition can provide boys with the stress needed to motivate them to practice. Encouraging boys to enter in performance competitions will motivate them to practice. A "personal competition" is good as well, such as practicing 100 days in a row. Using games and mini-competitions within the lesson will keep boy's interest and attention focused. Girls, on the other hand, tend to avoid competition and work better in a cooperative, group setting. An all-girl chamber group will allow their leadership skills to develop in a non-competitive environment. Using words in the lesson such as, "Can we...", or "Let's try..." will allow girls to feel relaxed in a cooperative setting with the teacher.

Emotions: Girls process emotion in the same area of the brain that processes language. For girls, talking about feelings and emotions comes with ease, and girls often enjoy talking about how they feel. In boys, the regions of the brain used for language are separate from the regions involved in emotions and feelings. Articulating feelings and emotions can be difficult for boys. Helping boys identify feelings will help them channel them into the music to create affect. Boys can create a scenario as to what they

envision happening along with the music, and from the scenario they can draw out emotion and affect. Keeping a journal with an ongoing list of affect words can be used as a reference for boys who struggle to identify what feelings the music provokes.

Challenge and Self Growth: In order for motivation to happen, the task at hand must be a challenge, yet attainable. Music educator researcher David Elliot concludes that self growth and motivation to practice for musical enjoyment is dependant on the relationship between the challenge level and one's skill level. If the challenge is below the skill level, the individual will be bored and unmotivated. If the challenge is too high above the skill level, the individual will become frustrated and unmotivated. Finding a challenge that is slightly above the skill level will motivate the student to work to achieve the challenge. Once the challenge is met, the student will experience self growth and increased self esteem, which in turn will motivate them to practice more. Dr. Suzuki's principles of small steps and small accomplishments hold the same truth for teenagers as it does for young Pre-Twinklers.

Elliot, David J. Music Matters: A New Philosophy of Music Education. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Sax, Leonard. "Why Gender Matters". New York: Random House Inc, 2005.



Parent Information Session

Tuesday, April 17th, 7:30 pm in NFAC Room 361. Topic will be **"Fostering Independent Learning"** -- valuable for experienced parents as well as new parents.



Roy Meyer Senior Recital

Roy Meyer, Kyoko Fuller's student will give his Senior Solo Violin Recital at 7:30 PM on Saturday, April 28 at Michelsen Hall, UWSP Noel Fine Art Building.

His program contains Carmen Fantasy by Sarasate, Violin Solo Sonata in g minor by J.S. Bach, Sonata for piano and violin in Bb major, K. 387 by Mozart, Hungarian Dance #1 by Brahms and Hora Staccato by Dinicu/Heifetz.



Voila Viola

By Dee Martz

Violist William Primrose was one of the great string players of the twentieth-century. A very active soloist he commissioned many works for viola and made many recordings. I am particularly pleased to have found a recording of him playing two selections that are found in the Suzuki viola books, Humoresque and the Handel (Casadesu) Concerto. The recordings were made when Primrose was at the height of his career and performing at his very best. This CD gives us the chance to hear just why William Primrose had such a powerful effect on the position of the viola as a solo instrument. Also included on the recording are two important mainstays of the artist level viola repertoire, the Walton Concerto and Flos Campi by Vaughn Williams. Easily found on a number of online sites, this would be a great addition to your collection of viola CDs.

William Primrose Pearl #9252



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.



March 2007 Graduates

Natalie Galster, Cello Book 4
Michael Crump, Violin Book 6
Nakisa Vaezzadeh, Violin Book 7
Joey Cal, Violin Book 4



April 2007 Graduates

Lamu Ryavec, Piano Twinkle
Lucas Chan, Violin Book 8
Aubrey Borchardt, Piano Twinkle
Lindsey Mocadlo, Violin Book 6
Will Mitchell, Violin Book 8



Student News

Philip Smyth, Kyoko Fuller's violin student and **Christopher Droske**, Dee Martz's viola student will give their joint Senior Recital on Sunday April 22nd at Pacelli High School auditorium.

On March 3, pianists **Lydia Anderson**, **Emily Boyle**, **Michael Josephson** and **Zachary Markman** participated in WSA district auditions.

On March 17, pianists **Lydia Anderson**, **Soren Anderson**, **Joseph Banovetz**, **Jordan Hornung**, **Michael Josephson**, **Isaac Klasinski**, **Zachary Markman**, **Zara Markman**, **Gwynna Norton**, **Annelise Odders**, **Erik O'Reilly**, **Sam Sheibley**,

Michael Thimmesch, Sarah Thimmesch, Ann Tillotson, Kelly Tillotson and Victoria Tillotson participated in the WMTA district auditions held in Stevens Point.

Kelley and Stacey Rolak both received 1* on their solo and ensemble pieces.

Natalie Galster, cello, performed celtic dinner music on March 17th at the Buck Rub Restaurant at the Pine Ridge in Wautoma.



Faculty News

Kyoko Fuller was a clinician at the Suzuki Spring Workshop and the Concert at the Suzuki String program, Levine School of Music in Washington D.C. She taught and gave a lecture about Dr. Suzuki and his legacy on March 2-3.

She was a clinician for the Suzuki Winter Workshop at Suzuki Strings of Madison and taught the tour group of St. Louis and Madison Suzuki students. She also gave a lecture about the founder of Suzuki method, Dr. Suzuki on March 25.

Upcoming Events

Marathon Saturday

April 28, 2007 (except piano)

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)



AMERICAN SUZUKI INSTITUTE

JULY 29 – AUGUST 4 and AUGUST 5 – 11, 2007

STUDENT CLASS OFFERINGS

July 29-August 4, 2007

Violin ♦ Piano ♦ Cello ♦ Flute ♦ Harp

August 5-11, 2007

Violin ♦ Piano ♦ Cello ♦ Viola ♦ Guitar ♦ Bass

July 29-August 11, 2007

Chamber Music Program for advanced students

FOR DETAILS, AND TO PRINT A BROCHURE AND APPLICATION, VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT:

WWW.UWSP.EDU/SUZUKI

MAP TO BEN FRANKLIN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL
2000 POLK STREET
STEVENS POINT

Suzuki String and Voice Festival Concert
Sunday, April 29, 2007
2:00 pm
Ben Franklin Junior High School Auditorium

