

AMBASSADOR

Aber Suzuki Center

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

May 2008

From the Director's Desk

By Dee Martz

I know that there are a number of Aber Suzuki Center families who have never been able to participate in the Institute. Thanks to the generosity of Anne Glenzer, a former Stevens Point Suzuki student, we are now able to award two \$250 scholarships to local students so that they can attend the American Suzuki Institute for the very first time. If you would like your child to be considered for this scholarship please fill out the application on the back page of this Ambassador and submit it to the ASC office by May 30.

There is no other way to describe how these scholarships happened other than to say that the email came out of the blue. The first contact included this intriguing statement. *"I am a Suzuki alum -- violin student of Miss Aber from about 1979 to 1983 (?). I attribute much of who I am and how I think to Miss Aber and the Suzuki method. Now I would like to give something back."*

My thoughts were running wild...I moved to Stevens Point in 1978 and our family immediately became involved in the Suzuki program. Perhaps I knew this former violin student. Hmm.... Anne Glenzer. Her name seems familiar yet I can't bring up an image of her face. Maybe if I knew more about her. As we wrote back and forth I felt sure that our paths crossed many times as Anne indicated that she was involved from Kindergarten or maybe even pre-K through 4th grade and that she studied with Mr. Landefeld. But all this time searching my memory is not important. What I really want to share is a very telling paragraph that appeared near the end of our most recent email contact.

Anne wrote: *"...sorry for getting so "deep" -- but it's interesting for me to reflect. In the past few years, I've come to recognize how I look at the world -- I have the ability to see the big picture as well as the minute details -- and how the big picture and the details affect each other. I'm a journalist by training. I was a reporter and editor for the past 10 years and just started as a strategic communications consultant a few months ago. This ability to see big picture (strategy, story-line, message, intent, vision) is enhanced by my ability to focus on the individual details that form the big picture. I think Suzuki shaped that dual-outlook. In order to perform a song well (see the big picture), you need to not only play the notes, but also focus on form and posture, and be able to hear subtle things that others would not even know to pay attention to."*

As Suzuki teachers we often say that we are teaching the whole child, that it is much more than music, that there are many benefits beyond music, that.... well you get the picture. Now we have a completely unsolicited testimonial that what is gained from involvement in the Suzuki program is much more than music. We all owe a big thank you to Anne Glenzer and not just for her donation. Thank you Anne for reminding us being involved in a Suzuki program can really change who we become.



Rejoicing in the Small Steps of Learning

By Kyoko Fuller

A fundamental principle of learning that Dr. Suzuki gave to us is that mastering highly complex activities like music is no more challenging than what little children

learn every day with the help of their parents, which learning how to speak. As children by nature have talent to learn the intricacies of speech, so in the same way they have talent to learn music, with beauty and mastery. This simple truth is being demonstrated everywhere by Suzuki students through the encouragement of their parents and the guidance of their teachers. As parents we know and believe this, but there is one aspect that we too easily forget, which is that the path of mastery is long and made of many steps, some big but mostly small, and if we are to see our children continue on the path, we must continue to rejoice in the small steps of learning. It is about how to keep attention on these small steps that this article will address.

The little steps we easily rejoice in

There are some moments in the child's life that are so precious because they represent a significant development in the child's growth. The first time he crawls, or walks, or talks. All parents can truly enjoy these steps of progress with excitement and without any thought of criticism or comparison. They are pure moments of joy shared between parent and child. And as parents, we delight in magnifying them, as we keep exclaiming in amazement, *Did you see that!* Or *Did you just hear what she said!* And *Wow! Say that again!* This is truly the joy of seeing growth in little steps.

And in this joy, there is no thought about how quickly the little child is growing, or what the next step is, or where this will lead in the future. It is all about what is happening right now in the enjoyment of a little moment of growth. Of course, these kinds of happy steps can be found in music, as well. The first time the instrument is picked up and held properly. The first time a beautiful sound is made with pure tone. The first piece is learned and played through in the lesson, the first recital. And so forth.

Something spoils the little steps

As little children grow a little more, parents begin to expect them to grow more quickly than they possibly can. Strangely, a kind of impatience develops. Why this is would be hard to say, but they want their little child to stop growing in little steps and to start to take giant steps. Perhaps, they become worried about whether their child is smart enough to do well in school. Or maybe it is because some other children seem to be moving faster. Or maybe they are just bored. For whatever reason, it becomes hard for them to enjoy the little steps of growth.

And the same kind of impatience and fatigue affects students, as well. They desperately want to move ahead more quickly and reach the final destination. Somehow the process seems entirely too slow and unbearable. Eventually, teachers also can succumb to this kind of frustration and let students give up before they have really had a proper chance to succeed. This is too bad, because one of the great wonders of the Suzuki method is how carefully Dr. Suzuki laid out a path containing many wonderful and satisfying small steps.

Sometimes students have an internal sense about the pace of mastery and encouragement. A young student who was working on Vivaldi Concerto in book 5 was asked to play in recital and became afraid. Her teacher thought she could play it very well but in reality she still wasn't confident to play it. Then in the lesson when she played an easier review piece, Waltz in book 2, it became so obvious as she played it with confidence and joy and outstanding musical expression. Her teacher was touched deeply and realized how wrong she was to push her beyond her readiness.

Keeping Big Steps in the Background

The musical repertoire and sequence of pieces in the Suzuki method is designed carefully to keep a balance between the big steps of progress, such as the completion of books and recitals, and the many little steps of technical mastery that must occur within each book. Many times parents and students will want to rush the important little steps of technical mastery such as tone production, shifting, vibrato, etc in order to take the bigger steps of advancement through the repertoire. However, the most satisfying and successful progress will be made when the students and parents can focus on the enjoyment of small steps. Then when the teachers sees the student is ready for a recital there will be a kind of surprise at how well prepared she is to perform.

When the big steps like book graduations become the focus of the child's attention, the journey suddenly becomes very long again. Soon you hear the questions like "How many books are there?" and "It will take forever to get there!" Or in the opposite case, where children are advancing quickly, they start wanting to move even faster. "Can we go on to the next? I want to graduate book 6 by the next month!" Parents easily get excited by the child's ambition like that, too. Regardless, an emphasis on graduations and recitals

pulls our minds away from daily tasks where vital progress of skill development must happen, and always happens in many small steps.

Recovering joy in the little steps of progress

For students and parents, here are some simple points to help us focus on the joy of small accomplishments:

1. Between lessons, make sure you know clearly what points you are to focus on. There should be several, but not too many and not just one.
2. When one step is accomplished, even if the others are not, take some time to rejoice together while demonstrating the accomplishment. There needs to be a clear recognition of a critical step having been mastered. Take some moments to talk about how important that step is and how it will help in making better music.
3. When one step becomes frustrating and progress does not seem to be happening, keep working on the other steps. Like a puzzle, the difficult pieces eventually fit into the oddest places and they often take much longer than we think they should. But as the other steps are learned around this stubborn one, finally with great surprise the piece is found. And what rejoicing there is when that happens, especially when it has happened with patience and confidence! Then we will hear the voice of students: *Now it sounds whole lot better! It is much easier to play! I love this piece now!*
4. Concerning the big steps, make sure that they are also understood as very important goals. But use caution about setting up expectations as to when they will happen. Again, in this case, surprise is always the greatest part of joy. When the student who has been working hard on all the precious small steps of mastery is then told she is ready to play in recital, there will be a thrill that energizes the preparation even more.

Just as parents can enjoy their little child's first baby steps and first words without thinking of how many miles they will walk or how many vocabulary words they will learn, so Suzuki parents can take joy in the moments of their child's wonder in music. The process of growth is beautiful in itself and we must take time to enjoy these precious moments without looking at the clock. The students' eagerness to learn with quick working minds is fun to watch, and that joy is not about

the quantity of music learned or challenge to the mind as in a musical game. The true challenge of Suzuki education is a nurturing of the heart through the experience of music. We strive for children to grow in patience, sensitivity and understanding—qualities of mind that are highly valuable to humankind.

"Beautiful tone, Beautiful heart "

"Tone has living soul" -- Dr. S. Suzuki



Voila Viola

By Dee Martz

It is that time of year again. I am all excited about going to the garden center to get a planter full of violas---you know the flowers that look like pansies but are really much, much better.

I am not particularly good with plants but I do want to make sure that my violas survive and even thrive during the summer. I want my violas to thrive during the summer so I must make sure to pay attention to them on a regular basis. They may need special fertilizer for flowering plants. They will need daily sun and regular watering. I am also absolutely positive that my planter of violas will thrive with lots of compliments and smiles.

I also want my violists to thrive during the summer. So please pay attention to them on a regular basis. The fertilizer they need is listening. The watering is regular practice. And of course lots of compliments and smiles will make all my young violists flourish.



Parent Education Sessions

Please join the May session "In the Good Old Summertime: Survival of Those Lazy Days of Summer" on **Tuesday, May 13, at 7:30 pm, NFAC 144.**

We look forward to seeing you there!!!



Aber Children's Scholarships Awarded

The American Suzuki Foundation Board selected four families to receive the Aber Children's Scholarships for 2007-08. Decisions were made based on careful consideration of essays submitted by parents and students, teacher evaluations, and teacher comments. This scholarship was created by Margery Aber to recognize students and their families who exemplify the Suzuki philosophy. Award recipients represented all instrumental programs offered within the Aber Suzuki Center from which applications were received.

The Foundation is pleased to make the awards to the following families and students:

The David and Agnes Chan Family
Lucas Chan, Violin

The Tom and Jenni Yang Family
Olivia Yang, Cello

The Lei Yao and Yeping Sun Family
Annie Yao, Violin

The Josephson Family
Michael Josephson, Piano & Violin
Laura Josephson, Piano & Violin

Congratulations! We also thank all the families who took the time and effort to apply for this scholarship. There were many wonderful applications, and the decisions were difficult to make. We applaud the accomplishment and commitment of every family and student, and we encourage all Aber Suzuki Center families to apply next year!



Adults Only Recital

By Tom Yang

On Saturday, May 31, there will be an informal performance opportunity for the adults studying at the Aber Suzuki Center. We will commence at 10 a.m. in NFAC 150, also known as Tom Yang's studio. We will have the usual blend of coffee, snacks, music and discussion of things musical and non-musical.

If you need a reason to come to this recital, here are ten:

1. To give yourself a low-key opportunity to try your pieces out.
2. To hear other adult musicians and see that music learning does happen for adults.
3. To drink coffee, consume carbohydrates and feel justified in doing so because you are also taking in high culture.
4. To realize that you are not alone in pursuing music while holding a job, maintaining a household, chasing children around and doing all the other adult things that young musicians don't have to deal with.
5. To get away from holding a job, maintaining a household, chasing children around and doing all the other adult things for an hour or so.
6. To commiserate with fellow musicians that playing the "Twinkles" is more challenging than it looks.
7. To learn from fellow travelers that we do overcome what had seemed to be insurmountable challenges.
8. To meet people who enjoy learning and growing even when they don't have to.
9. To see the prairie plantings in front of my studio window.
10. To see if the host of the recital will actually clear off his desk to commemorate the occasion.

Hope to see you there!



Aber Suzuki Center Awarded Newsline 9's "Classroom of the Week"

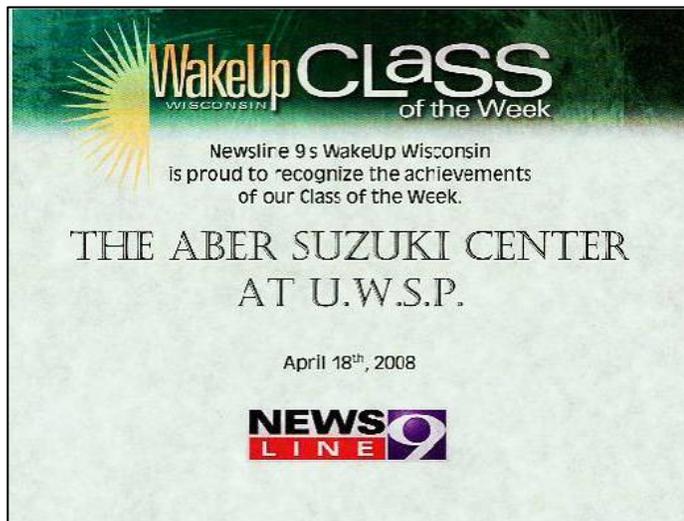
By Pat D'Ercole

I arrived as usual at 9:00 am on Wednesday, April 16. Imagine my delight when opening my email I found the following message from Newsline 9's Natalie Sparacio,

Wake Up Wisconsin anchor: "Thank you for sending all the information about the Aber Suzuki Center service project. It is very impressive! I have a feeling I'll be talking to you soon about Class of the Week."

And soon she did! The next day I received the call notifying us that the Aber Suzuki Center had been selected as the "Classroom of the Week." The students of the Aber Suzuki Center were nominated for the community service given this year for the Practice-athon which raised a total of \$3,179.49 to help a group of Suzuki students from Latin America attend the Suzuki Association of the Americas' 13th Conference in Minneapolis this May and for playing for patients and staff at St. Michael's Hospital in December and April.

If you missed it and would like to see the two-minute feature, see Prof. Pat.



Melodramatic

By Tom Yang

In the last Ambassador, I noted that on March 3, a number of students from our program performed in a monodrama that I had written some years back. The term melodrama is probably more accurate. At any rate, a melodrama is a narrative accompanied by music. In this case, my melodrama, "Tupman the Turtle" is a narrative about a turtle who wants to audition for a musical tour group, but has doubts about his playing because he can't play very fast. The music used to

accompany this narrative comes from Book 1 pieces in the Suzuki Piano Method (with additions from the Cello Method to let my daughter play too).



Children enjoy narratives. I've used this story in many Book 1 home recitals and have found it to be fun. It also encourages review. The use of melodramas in home recitals is quite widespread in the Suzuki piano world. Many children write their own stories and I sometimes have students "edit" my story to their own taste.



I think that we all had a good time doing the melodrama. The students who played included **Katla Anderson, Aubrey Borchardt, Sienna Borchardt, Kobe Carlson, Trevor Carlson, Jake Dudas, Nathan Hunter, Ted Irons, Mac Lucas, Victoria Tillotson, Erin Tschida and Olivia Yang.** Jenni Yang did the narration. The performance took place at the Portage County Library on Main Street, Stevens Point.

Student News

Jesse Nummelin and James Banovetz performed the Vivaldi Concerto in G Minor for Two Cellos (first movement) with the SPASH Chamber Orchestra on Tuesday, April 29th. The "Jesse James Duo" was a great success.

On Saturday, May 3 the "European Violinists" and "European Cellists" played for the Portage County Cultural Fair held at SPASH. Thanks to all the students (and parents) who participated. Performing in the violin portion were **Clara and Ethan Allar, Brynn Beversdorf, Marco Kurzynski, Alyssa Eiden, Maleah Zinda, Rachel Ley and MJ DeBot**. Performing on cello were **Dinesh Traynor, Sarah Bauer, Chiara Phillips and Megan Mutschlecner**.



Violists **John Banovetz and Will Peck**, and violinists **Hannah Buehler, Will Mitchell and Lindsey Mocadlo** auditioned for the Wisconsin High School Honors

Orchestra in February and were notified recently that they made it into the orchestra. The orchestra meets for 3 1/2 days of rehearsal in June at the University of Wisconsin - Green Bay. The Honors Project groups which include choir and band in addition to the orchestra will all perform at the beautiful Overture Center Auditorium in Madison as part of the Wisconsin Music Educators Convention held in October of 2008.

Gretchen, Emma and Erik Sands, and Maria Marchel, played in the Waupaca Community Orchestra (Waupaca Fine Arts Festival) on April 6.



Congratulations Seniors!!

James Banovetz is graduating from SPASH. James is planning on attending Hillsdale College in Michigan where he intends to major in Political Science and Economics.

Jesse Nummelin is graduating from SPASH. Jesse is planning on attending either the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, or Western Michigan University where he plans on majoring in music performance and education.

Katie Leifheit is graduating from Marshfield Senior High School. She has been accepted at several colleges including Georgetown University in Washington D.C. At this time Katie plans to pursue a career in Medicine.

Maria Marchel is graduating from SPASH. She will be attending UWSP as a music major in the fall.

Kelley Rolak is graduating from Marshfield High School. She will be attending UW-Madison and is planning on majoring in music, and then continuing on to medical school.

Tyler Bauer is graduating from Waupaca High School and plans to enter Edgewood College in Madison, majoring in Nursing.

Michael Crump is graduating from Marshfield Senior High School and plans to attend UW-Madison.

Gretchen Sands is graduating from Waupaca High School, and plans to attend Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota, majoring in music.

Kelsey Christensen is graduating from SPASH and plans on attending the Twin Cities campus of the University of Minnesota. Kelsey's college plans include Spanish and anthropology.

Anna Luetmer is graduating from Newman Catholic High School in Wausau and will be attending Marquette University in Milwaukee where she has been accepted into the College of Letters and Sciences.

Nadia Qutaishat is graduating from Marshfield Senior High School and will be attending the University of Wisconsin - Madison where she is planning on studying astrophysics.

Sam Schenkman is graduating from Marshfield Senior High school and will be attending the Twin Cities campus of the University of Minnesota. He currently plans on majoring in music and engineering.



Two Excellent ¾ Size Violins for Sale

If you are looking for a 3/4 size violin there are two fine instruments for sale right here at the Aber Suzuki Center. Both instruments bear the label of Rudoulf Doetsch and come from Dalton Potter's violin shop. The violins are both in mint condition, have rich, full tone and come with bow and case. For more information or to try the instruments please contact Dave Becker at 346-4902 in NFAC room 142.



Faculty News

Dee Martz, Tim Mutschlecner and Dave Becker all performed with the Central Wisconsin Symphony Orchestra on April 19 and 20 at Sentry Theater.



Upcoming Events

Saturday, May 10, 2008

Solo & Ensemble Concert – 2:00 and 3:30 pm,
Michelsen Hall

Saturday, May 10, 2008

CSCO Concert, 7:30 pm, Michelsen Hall

Sunday, May 11, 2008

Piano Festival Concert, 2:00 and 3:30 pm,
Michelsen Hall

Tuesday, May 13, 2008

Parent Education Session, "In The Good Old
Summertime: Survival of Those Lazy Days of Summer",
7:30 pm, NFAC 144



Happy Summer!

The next issue of the Ambassador will be published October, 2008

GLENZER SCHOLARSHIP FOR FIRST TIME ASI ATTENDEES

Family Name: _____

Name(s) of student(s) enrolled in the Aber Suzuki Center: _____

Ages of all children living at home: _____

Date: _____

Submit the following, along with this form, to the Aber Suzuki Center office by May 30th. Winners will be informed by June 6, 2008.

- Letter of application from the family that describes why your student should be given the opportunity to attend the American Suzuki Institute. Incorporating statements written by the student will strengthen the application. 1-2 pages total.

- Letter of support from ASC teacher that addresses the following:
 - Family commitment to the Suzuki philosophy.
 - Student's eagerness to learn.
 - Student's commitment to consistent preparation of weekly lesson.
 - Length of time child has been involved in Talent Education.

- Indicate which level best describes your family's gross income:
 - \$5,000 - \$19,000
 - \$20,000 - \$35,000
 - \$35,000 - \$50,000
 - \$50,000 +

- Explain any financial circumstances that, when considered along with family size and gross income, give a better picture of the financial need.

Decisions will be based on a combination of all the material submitted.