

AMBASSADOR

Aber Suzuki Center

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

February 2009

From the Director's Desk

By Dee Martz

THERE IS AN ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

On January 16 the Aber Suzuki Center faculty and staff met for an all day strategic planning session. We worked with a wonderful facilitator, Professor Chris Sadler. Following the process he set out we made lists and brainstormed strengths, concerns and opportunities found in the UWSP Suzuki programs. At some point during the afternoon session one of the faculty members mentioned the "elephant in the room." This is a common way of describing a really big issue that no one is talking about. Most of you may already know that the "elephant" at the Suzuki planning session was my plans to retire immediately after the 2009 American Suzuki Institute. I told the faculty of this plan in early December and at the end of the month wrote a letter to each of the families in my studio. The following is taken from that letter.

"I am writing to tell you that I am going to retire immediately following the 2009 American Suzuki Institute. I hope that you know that I love to teach each of you and that I love playing the viola. I also enjoy doing the many different parts of the job I have as Director of the Suzuki programs at UWSP and I am very grateful to be healthy. With those things in mind you no doubt wonder why I decided that this is the right time for me to retire. The truth is that the whole job, all twelve months of it, are more than I want to continue doing.

This is my 30th year at UWSP and my 23rd year as Director of the Suzuki programs. Because I have been around so long I know a lot of people who have retired in the last 5 years. Often I was very surprised at the timing of the decision to retire but each one assured me that when I my turn came I would "just know." Until very recently this made little sense, but now I understand. I do "just know" that this is the time. My husband knows that 2009 is not the year for him to retire so we will enter this new phase of life one at a time.

Although self-funded, the Director of the Aber Suzuki Center and the American Suzuki Institute is a titled position within the University of Wisconsin System. This means that there will be a national search for my replacement. When Dean Morin puts together the Search team I am confident that he will select a strong group of people who have the skills and the heart to select a

wonderful person to continue the work that Miss Aber started so long ago. Ethically I need to leave my students with the program and in fairness to the new Director I feel very strongly that I need to step into the background so that he/she can take charge and gradually gain the credibility necessary to do the job.

.....No doubt I will see many of you around town and elsewhere as I plan to attend the Music of the Masters and other major Suzuki events during the year. I will continue playing in the Central Wisconsin Symphony Orchestra and have some plans for chamber music performances next year..... I feel a great pull to spend more time with family and believe that this will be more possible in retirement. Beyond those few ideas I am just going to let this new phase of life gradually reveal itself."

When the last day of work comes and goes I will leave with love in my heart and *Hasta la Vista* on my lips.



Teaching Strategies for Practice

By Pat D'Ercole

Dr. Suzuki says that we must have 100 different ways to teach the same point. I knew that I had a few tricks that I applied in a variety of situations in order to do that, but I was searching for a ways to explain how parents could be inventive with these strategies as well. I wanted to find a way to classify these techniques in more generic terms, in a sort of "handbook" if you will. I finally came across just what I was looking for in a book and video called The Master Teacher Profile by Robert Culver. One chapter of the book is entitled "Teaching Strategies Glossary." I've selected twelve of these strategies that I use most often and that can be used by parents as well. I've included examples as well.

1. Game Strategy: This is by far the most common strategy with beginners. Winning the game becomes the primary focus and the correct repetition of a skill is the means to do it. Game markers (marbles, peanuts, M&M's, stickers) for keeping score add to the motivation. Be sure to set up clear rules as to how one gets points. Usually a practice round first before the game actually starts clears up any misunderstandings. Letting the student tell you who wins the point allows you to check their comprehension. Disputes or

indecision can be resolved by the old "cheater's proof" i.e., do it once again!

2. Challenge Strategy: This is closely akin to the game strategy, but may be less structured. One that I often use is "I'm pretty sure 7 year olds can play Lightly Row with their wrist straight, but I'm not sure if 6 year olds can. You try it and see if you can be like the 7 year olds." Another is, "Let's do this three times in a row correctly. If you make a mistake we go back to 0."

3. Dissect and Stack: This strategy is often used for remedial work. It involves breaking down a skill into its component parts and then rebuilding it without error. For string players this could be doing the bowing on an open string, then adding string crossing, then the left hand. For pianists, playing hand separately or even one note with the correct technique, then applying the technique to the troublesome passage and then hands together.

4. Discrimination Strategy: This strategy is used to test the student's understanding and is often demonstrated in role reversal. The student becomes the teacher and has to diagnose the parent's-who- is-acting-as-the-student's problem. Another discrimination strategy is to have the student choose between two examples the correct or preferred technique or sound.

5. Fantasy/Imagery Strategy: This strategy takes advantage of the student's imagination by using a story, or an analogy to achieve an objective. One that I've heard Kay Collier-Slone use is the analogy of a butterfly. It goes something like this: "When we hold a butterfly we hold it just firm enough so that it won't get away, but not so firmly that we'll break its wings. Pretend your bow is a butterfly."

6. Forecasting: In this strategy, the parent can forecast what the student needs to remember as they near the place of correction. A word or a gesture can be enough to alert and remind the student as he/she plays, but just before they reach that point of correction.

7. Question Strategy: This strategy like the discrimination strategy tests the student's understanding rather than their ability. Questions can be asked that foster focus such as "What did your teacher ask you to remember in this place?" Or, they can be used to encourage creative/independent thinking, "Do you think we should make a crescendo or a diminuendo here?" thus placing the student in a more active role.

8. Ratchet Strategy: In this strategy a student must successfully and completely execute a passage or skill before receiving any confirmation or advancing to the next step.

9. Disguised Repetition: In this strategy, many devices/strategies are used to teach the same goal. For example, one could use the dissect and stack strategy, then the game or challenge strategy and then the transference strategy, all in regard to the same skill, but changing the activity holds the child's attention..

10. Transference: This strategy is particularly successful when a student is "trying too hard", that is, over-concentration that results in tension and the inability to produce the desired objective. Its purpose is to temporarily distract the student or transfer their concentration to some other activity. Examples would be to walk while playing, sing or play with your eyes closed or wiggling your toes.

11. Venting Strategy: Releasing tension is the goal of this strategy. Physical tension can be released by doing ten jumping jacks or

stretching exercises. Psychological tension can be released by asking the child to do a skill incorrectly on purpose. This is particularly effective for 3-5 year olds who are eager to exercise their independence. Ex., "Show me an ugly wrist, your worst bow hold, the worst body posture for performance. Now show me the best."

12. Guided Awareness: In this strategy the parent/teacher can raise the students' awareness through touch, guided movement or verbal suggestion. Listening and/or watching oneself on an audio or video tape would be another method of raising awareness.

My hope is that by naming and classifying these strategies, will be able to recognize them when you see them at your lessons and, with a little practice you, too, will have them at your command, thereby making practice sessions with your child more productive and fun.



Voila Viola

By Dee Martz

It is easy to understand a parental decision to embark on the adventure of Talent Education, but it is difficult for me to comprehend what makes the violin so much more popular than the viola. In Stevens Point, viola students are outnumbered by violinists ten to one. The most common reasons given by Suzuki parents and teachers for selecting the viola are:

1. The child is an older beginner
2. A sibling is already studying violin
3. The child is big for his age
4. The orchestra needs violas
5. The chamber music program needs violas
6. The child/parent prefers small groups
7. The child currently studies violin and needs a change (translation: things are not going well)
8. The parent/child relates well to the viola teacher

Interestingly enough, the reason I chose viola is rarely mentioned. I was captivated by the sound. In fact, I really feel more like the viola chose me. With so few students selecting viola, I must conclude that either I am quite unusual, or more parents and children would chose viola if given the opportunity to hear it played well.

The reasons are clear for encouraging viola study in the circumstances outlined above, but the time is here for viola to be an instrument of choice rather than the least cumbersome alternative to the violin.

Many families do choose the "unviolin" but gradually viola has become the first choice instrument because they appreciate the uniquely rich tone color ... because they love the viola sound.



ASC Parent Education Sessions

All Aber Suzuki Center parents are encouraged to attend the Parent Education Sessions which are offered to you free of charge! Join the February session, **"Suzuki: Translating the Philosophy into Reality"**, on Tuesday, February 10, at 7:30 pm in NFAC Room 144.

Future sessions are as follows:

March 10: "Do You Hear What I Hear?" (Listening)

April 14: "Fostering Independent Learning"

May 12: "In the Good Old Summertime: Survival of Those Lazy Days of Summer"

We look forward to seeing you there!!!



Chamber Music Weekend

The following students participated in the annual Festive Weekend of Chamber Music at the Aber Suzuki Center: **Sarah Bauer, Lucas Chan, M. J. DeBot, Wade Dittburner, Craig Felt, Laura Josephson, Christina Marchel, Zara Markman, Erik Sands, and Jason Smith.**

The students rehearsed as chamber music groups, participated in an enrichment class offered by Dr. Charles Young ("If You Can Talk, You Can Compose") and presented a concert at the end of the day on Saturday. It was an exciting and inspiring weekend for all who attended!



Aber Suzuki Center Parking Spaces

You may be asking what happened to the third Suzuki permit parking slot in Lot R. Well, it was moved.

From the northwest corner of Lot R going east, there are now two handicap slots, and then two Suzuki slots. They moved the third Suzuki slot to the southwest corner of Lot R where the second handicap slot used to be.

Be sure you are not parking in a handicap slot! Fines are high and strictly enforced.

↑
NORTH

PORTAGE STREET				
Handicap	Handicap	Suzuki	Suzuki	Regular
PHILLIPS STREET				
Suzuki	Regular	Regular	Regular	Regular



Student News

Students from the Aber Suzuki Center performed for the Boys and Girls Club of Portage County Art Show on Tuesday, January 6th. Thanks to the **Van Tiems; Antony, Frederick, and Natalie, the Traynors; Roshni and Dinesh, Alyssa Schroekenthaler, Marco Kurzynski, Will Mitchell, and Audrey Mutschlecner** for coming out on a snowy night.

Congratulations to **Petrea Schedgick** who presented her senior recital on Sunday, January 25th. Petrea was assisted by Mr. Becker on piano and Stacy Rolak on violin. Petrea beautifully performed Corelli's *La Folia*, the entire Bach *Concerto in A minor*, the *Prelude and Gavotte* by Shostakovich, *Prelude and Berceuse* by Dr. Suzuki and Potstock's *Souvenir de Sarasate*. Petrea plans to pursue a degree in music education.



Faculty Recital Set for February 22nd

ASC faculty, **Pat D'Ercole and Ann Marie Novak** are collaborating to present a recital at 1:30 on Sunday, February 22nd in Michelsen Hall. Please note the starting time. The recital will begin earlier than normal to give CWSO orchestra members enough time to get to their concert later that day.

The program will begin with Sonata No.2 in e by Corelli followed by a "Suzuki Suite". The suite consists of the *Gavotte* from "Mignon", the Handel *Bourree*, *Minuet II* and Gossec *Gavotte* played with examples of advanced bowing techniques and tone. It is intended to demonstrate for ASC students that it's not *what* you play that creates beauty, but *how* you play it and how review pieces can be used to develop advanced techniques. In addition,

Somewhere and *America*, a concert arrangement of two songs from Leonard Bernstein's well-known "West Side Story" will be played. The program will conclude with the *Meditation* from "Thais", Kreisler's *Liebesleid* and Sarsate's *Zigeunerweisen*.



November Graduates

Ada Sell, Violin Twinkles
 Marco Kurzynski, Violin Book 2
 Joe Bartow, Violin Book 5
 Ben Karbowski, Violin Book 8
 Lydia Ensminger, Piano Twinkles
 Kiira Jensen, Piano Book 1
 Isaac Klasinski, Piano Book 2
 Roshini Traynor, Viola Book 4
 Will Mitchell, Violin Book 9
 Dinesh Traynor, Cello Book 2
 Gerard Sakamaki, Cello Book 4
 Will Mitchell, Cello Book 9



January Graduates

Amy Sutheimer, Piano Book 1
 Trenton Seegert, Cello Book 2
 Joey Cal, Violin Book 5
 Emma Sands, Violin Book 8
 Ann Tillotson, Piano Book 3
 Lydia Anderson, Piano Book 7
 Annie Yao, Violin Book 7
 Wade Dittburner, Violin Book 8



Upcoming Events

Saturday, February 7, 2009
 Marathon, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Tuesday, February 10
 Parent Education Session
 "Suzuki: Translating the Philosophy into Reality"
 NFAC 144, 7:30 pm

Sunday, February 8, 2009
 Solo Recitals, 2:00 and 3:30 pm, NFAC Michelsen Hall

Saturday, February 14, 2009
 Hannah Buehler Senior Recital (Violin, Viola)
 7:30 pm, NFAC Michelsen Hall

Sunday, February 22, 2009
 Pat D'Ercole Recital
 1:30 pm, Michelsen Hall

Saturday, February 28, 2009
 Marathon, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Saturday, February 28, 2009
 Solo Recitals, 2:00 and 3:30 pm, NFAC Michelsen Hall

Tuesday, March 10
 Parent Education Session
 "Do You Hear What I Hear?" (Listening)
 NFAC 144, 7:30 pm

Sunday, March 22, 2009
 Julida Kochanowski Senior Recital (Piano)
 4:00 pm, Michelsen Hall

Saturday, April 4, 2009
 Marathon (Piano Only), 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Sunday, April 5, 2009
 Solo Recitals, 2:00 and 3:30 pm, NFAC Michelsen Hall

Tuesday, April 14
 Parent Education Session
 "Fostering Independent Learning"
 NFAC 144, 7:30 pm

Saturday, April 25, 2009
 Hillary Anderson Senior Recital (Voice)
 1:30 pm, NFAC Michelsen Hall

Sunday, April 26, 2009
 String & Voice Festival Concert
 2:00 pm, Ben Franklin Junior High School Auditorium

Saturday, May 9, 2009
 Solo & Ensemble Concert
 2:00 and 3:30 pm, NFAC Michelsen Hall

Saturday, May 9, 2009
 CSCO Concert
 7:30 pm, NFAC Michelsen Hall

Sunday, May 10, 2009
 Piano Festival Concert
 2:00 and 3:30 pm, NFAC Michelsen Hall

Tuesday, May 12
 Parent Education Session
 "In the Good Old Summertime: Survival of Those Lazy Days of Summer"
 NFAC 144, 7:30 pm