



AMBASSADOR

Aber Suzuki Center

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

February, 2010

Upcoming Events

Tuesday, February 9, 2010
Parent Education Session
“Practicing, the Great Quest for
Consistency without Boredom”
7:30 pm, NFAC 144

Sunday, February 14, 2010
ASC Faculty Recital
2:00 pm, NFAC Michelsen Hall

Saturday, February 20, 2010
Marathon, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Sunday, February 21, 2010
Solo Recitals, 2:00 and 3:30 pm
NFAC Michelsen Hall

Tuesday, March 9, 2010
Parent Education Session
“The Art of Reviewing with a Purpose”
7:30 pm, NFAC 144

Saturday, March 13, 2010
Marathon, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Sunday, March 14, 2010
Solo Recitals, 2:00 and 3:30 pm
NFAC Michelsen Hall

Saturday, April 10, 2010
Piano (only) Marathon, 9:00 am-12:00 pm

From the Director's Desk

By Pat D'Ercole, Interim Director

Please do this experiment with me. Find a pencil and paper and draw a quahog? Don't know what one is? OK, try this one. Please draw a mazzard? Having trouble? What if I asked you to draw a chair? Ah, much easier, right? Which kind do you want to draw—a desk chair, a lawn chair, a recliner, a rocking chair? What happened in your mind as you read each of those chair-types? Usually, a picture of one pops into your imagination and the more familiar you are with one of those types of chairs, the more vividly you can recall it.

Ok, please draw a rocking chair. Did you have to erase any lines? Why did you erase them? For me, it's usually because I can't make the lines on my paper match what I have visualized in my mind. So what does all of this have to do with music and the Suzuki method? Visualization is to drawing what listening is to playing your instrument.

We listen so that we have an aural “picture” in our mind from which to play. That's very important in order to learn our pieces by ear. By the end of Book 1 or so, most students have begun to develop very keen ear-hand coordination. They hear a note and the correct finger goes down without even thinking! It's like the brain is the computer and the hands are the printer. Whatever is on the computer screen i.e. in their mind's ear, is what the fingers play. So if learning new pieces is tedious and slow, assess your listening time. It's a painless way to speed up the learning process.

There's another benefit as well. If you have a good aural model in your mind, you can compare your performance to it and correct mistakes even before you get to your next lesson. When I was growing up, my pieces were not recorded on CD, so my inaccurate attempts at playing the

piece at home, maybe 75 repetitions in one week, became the model in my ear. Then I would go to my lesson and my teacher would point out my mistakes. We might play it 3 or 4 times together, but then I would have to remember that correction until the next time I practiced. Four correct renditions vs. 75 incorrect renditions, which do you think won out?

Listening should always be at least one or two pieces ahead of the piece you are learning to play. I tell my students that they should listen to their current piece, the one just previous to it and the one they will learn next. If you can't program your stereo to repeat the three, it's easy to record them on to a CD pop it into your CD player and press the repeat button. Be careful of using an iPod. Not only do we need to really know if the student is listening to the Suzuki CD, but if that's the only way the listening is done, the practicing parent is deprived the chance to get the model in their ears. That will make the job of being the home teacher much harder. Dr. Suzuki would say that you know you've listened enough when the non-practicing parent can hum the tunes. Play the CD for about 45 minutes. If the three pieces take 6 minutes, then you will hear them 7-8 times each. Of course, listening to the all the tracks is good too, as well as the CDs of more advanced books. If students find a piece that captures their interest, they will be more motivated to practice.

Turn the page to ...*And the Survey Says* to find out from parents what has worked for them.

By the way, a quahog is an edible clam found off the coast of Maine. A mazzard is a type of wild cherry.



ASC Teachers Collaborate in a Faculty Recital

On Sunday, February 14, the Aber Suzuki Center will present a Faculty Recital at 2:00 pm in Michelsen Hall. Joining the faculty will be guest artists JoAnne Peck and Jenni Yang. The program will include works by Schubert, Kreisler, Popper, Vivaldi, Dvorak and Debussy. The concert is free and open to the public.

While Aber Suzuki Center students often see David Becker and Tom Yang perform as collaborative pianists, as well as hear faculty perform as members of the Central Wisconsin Symphony Orchestra, it is a rare opportunity to hear these teachers join together to perform chamber works. Included in Sunday's program are works in the

Suzuki repertoire as well as pieces that are teacher favorites. Faculty members along with JoAnne Peck will combine as a chamber orchestra to accompany soloist Pat D'Ercole in the Concerto in A Minor by Antonio Vivaldi. Mary Hofer, along with Jenni and Tom Yang on clarinet and piano, will bring us a foretaste of Spring with the lovely *Shepherd on the Rock* by Schubert. And much more! This is a concert not to be missed. Bring a friend!



The Chamber Music Experience: Life-long Learning and Good, Clean Fun

By Ann Marie Novak

Something wonderful happened recently at the Aber Suzuki Center. Did you catch it? It's called the Festive Weekend of Chamber Music. Now, before you turn the page and say...this isn't for me...my kids are too young, or...I've never heard of chamber music before...this must not be for me...wait! This is something worthwhile to learn about, something exciting, something intensely motivating for your children!

Chamber music, generally speaking, is music played by a small group of musicians. Customarily, each player has his/her own independent part (all of which fit together). This differs from an orchestra, where it is possible to have numerous musicians playing the same violin or cello part. The simplest form of chamber music is the duet, which involves two people. From there, the numbers increase...we have trios, quartets, quintets, etc. More specifically, groups are labeled according to their instrumentation. For example, string quartets generally include 2 violins, 1 viola and 1 cello; a piano trio is comprised of piano, violin and cello; wind quintets are made up of 5 wind instruments, and so on.

So, what is it that makes this event so appealing? It's a little tricky to put a finger on exactly what makes this weekend so wonderful, but one thing I know with utter certainty is that, for the past 13 years, I have come home from this cold January weekend with a major high. I believe that there are numerous things that conspire to create this total feel-good experience, but first, I would like to share with you a little about what transpires both before and during the Festive Weekend of Chamber Music.

The whole process begins in November, when each faculty member makes a list of their students who are eligible to participate in the weekend (students who are

between 11 and 14 years old and who are in Book 4 and above). We each send this list to Christine, and she mails out a letter to the families of these students, informing them of the event, and inviting them to participate. Then, we wait.

We wait for students to send in their form and a check for a modest \$90. Then, Mr. Becker and I take the names, ages and levels of these students, and we start to put the pieces of the puzzle together...who will be a good match for whom? What instrument combinations are possible? What specific pieces would best suit these particular students? When we have the answers we need, we get the music ready to be handed out to students so that they can learn the notes and have a couple of lessons on the pieces with their private teacher before the Holidays.

Somewhere around the 3rd week in January, the students who have elected to participate in the Festive Weekend of Chamber Music come together on a Friday night and the magic begins. Students meet each other and their chamber music coach (usually an ASC faculty member) and they have a first rehearsal. This rehearsal usually is a brand new experience for kids of this age and level. For most, it is the first time they have played in a group where each member is solely responsible for his or her own part. This means knowing your part, getting along with others, making a team effort, knowing when to take the lead and when to take a back seat to others, and most of all, it means being able to count and collectively execute the rhythms of the given pieces.

After an hour or so of coaching, students go home for the night (some from out of town stay over in a Hotel), and come back in the morning for another rehearsal. Then, it's off to lunch, followed by an enrichment class (composition, yoga, and Brain Gym are a few topics that have been offered over the years), one more coaching, and then, to top the day off in style, each group performs in an informal concert.

On the surface, this all seems very routine and straightforward. It's what happens underneath the surface between Friday night and Saturday afternoon that is nothing less than amazing. You see, when the students first come together, the music they are playing is, well, a bit in the rough, so to speak. But by Saturday afternoon at the concert, the music is sweet indeed. In less than 24 hours, it all comes together and is presented as a solid performance. The transformation is complete. Four individual students each playing independent parts have become a quartet. It is no coincidence that the term "quartet" is singular. Students have learned not only to play as one, but also to think and even breathe as one.

What then, besides unity, makes this experience so exciting and valuable?

First and foremost, playing chamber music with your peers is fun. It presents an opportunity to spend some quality time with friends around a joyous activity...making music. It is certainly a social activity, and it is very rewarding. I believe that, in many ways, it is like taking part in a team sport...your individual effort is incredibly important, but the thing that breeds success is the cooperative interaction with your teammates. Good communication is of the essence.

Chamber playing requires sensitivity and finesse. One must know when to take the lead and when to support other players and when to fade into the background. Balancing the individual against the team teaches more about music than just about any other activity I can think of. One minute an individual poses as a leader with the melody, the next minute that same individual may be paired up in a duet with someone else, and the next minute that person will serve as accompanist to another player. Knowing when to lead and when to jump out of the way makes for an exhilarating ride; and besides that, it also helps to develop a music *student* into a fine *musician*. One becomes aware not just of sound, but also of the fabric, or the texture of the music. For me, the joy of being a soloist does not even begin to compare with the thrill of being part of a larger whole. In this case, the whole is much greater than the sum of the parts. There is no better feeling than when a quartet or trio functions as one...it reminds each of us that we in fact are more than just individuals...we are a part of something greater than ourselves.

Another wonderful thing about chamber music is that it can be a lifelong endeavor. I am a devoted golfer...and I see numerous parallels between golf and chamber music, the most salient of which is the fact that these are both activities that we can engage in not only in youth, but throughout our lives. As such, it remains something not to be accomplished and tossed aside, but rather, something to live with, to grow with, to be pursued with vigor and joy. In many ways, it is like that elusive "best round" of golf.

As a professional musician, it may be difficult to get a booking as a soloist, but there are always musicians around who want to get together and play chamber music. And it is equally delightful to play it among friends as it is to perform it with colleagues. It always is something to be looked forward to, at any age, at any time. And the friends one makes around playing chamber music often are friends for life. There is a sharing here that goes far

Cello News

beyond words. These friendships are immeasurably valuable throughout all phases of life, but perhaps most of all during the teenage years, when friends have such strong influence on each other. Parents, if you think about what kind of friends you want your kids to have as teens, wouldn't that be someone who shares interests (good, wholesome interests) with your child, someone who is sensitive to others around them, someone who sometimes stays in on Friday nights simply because they want (or need) to practice their instrument? And when your teen broaches the subject of "quitting" their instrument, wouldn't it be nice to know that at least some of their friends would be encouraging them to stick with it?

Given all of these good points about chamber music, the question now raised is this: "What chamber music opportunities exist within our program?"

First, it is important to know that, while the Festive Weekend of Chamber Music is in and of itself a fantastic event, it really is just the beginning of one's chamber music life. In theory, students may attend this happening up to four times. At any time after that, students are welcomed to request participation in a chamber group that meets weekly for a semester, or a year, or more. If you are interested in doing this, contact your private teacher, and he/she will seek out other faculty members who have students who are interested, and together, those teachers will attempt to form a group of students whose ages, levels and personalities are well-suited to each other.

If you find this type of playing interesting and exciting, you may then want to sign up for the Chamber Music Camp that is a part of the American Suzuki Institute. This camp provides an intensive chamber music experience for students during the two weeks of the summer institute that occurs right here in Stevens Point. If you attend the Institute as a chamber music player, you might just find yourself playing alongside of other students from all corners of the globe. Can you imagine making music with someone from Japan or Argentina or Australia?

So parents, if you want to get your child started in a chamber music experience, consider signing him or her up for the annual Festive Weekend of Chamber Music when they are of age. Students, if you are interested in chamber music and you are between the ages of 11 and 14 (and in Book 4 or above), show this article to your parents, and ask them to look out for the invitation to attend in 2011.



Cello Day 2010 will take place from noon to 6 pm on April 11th in the Noel Fine Arts Center. Open to cellists of all ages this will be a day where you can meet other cellists, play cello ensemble music, and explore new ways to approach the cello. Cello Improviser, Matt Turner will lead us through the exciting field of creating your own music and will have us all improvising by the end of the day. Break-out sessions include: **Preparing for Competitions and Auditions, Joys and Challenges of Adult Cello Study, Wiring your Cello, Building your Chops, and Making your Practicing More Efficient and Fun.** This year's event will be hosted by Dr. Lawrence Leviton, Professor of Cello at UW-Stevens Point, and Dr. Tim Mutschlecner. Please check with Tim for application forms which are due by April 1st.



Welcome Back Mrs. Martz!!

Welcome back to Mrs. Martz who has graciously agreed to teach the viola marathons again beginning in February in NFAC 146. Book 1-3 will meet from 9:30 – 10:15 and Book 4+ from 10:45-noon. Watch your email for special invitations from her. Special thanks to Dr. Tim and the cellists for hosting the Book 1 & 2 violists in their class last semester.



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, "Practicing, the Great Quest for Consistency without Boredom", **Tuesday, February 9, at 7:30 pm in NFAC Room 144.**

Future sessions are as follows:

March 9, "The Art of Reviewing with a Purpose"

April 13, "Fostering Independent Learning" – BRING A FRIEND MEETING!

May 11, "You Decide the Topic" – details TBA

Save the Date!! We're Celebrating 40!!

The 40th American Suzuki Institute (ASI) will be held here on the UW-SP campus August 1-7 and 8-14, 2010. Way back in 1971, Miss Aber got the idea to hold a summer camp modeled after the one in Japan for American Suzuki students, their parents and teachers. It's the oldest and largest institute outside Japan, and 69 institutes throughout the Americas are modeled after it. Stevens Point is famous among musicians because of it. Over 100,000 people have come to ASI in the past 40 years.

What happens at the institute? Each day consists of an individual lesson, a small technique group class and a large repertoire class taught by teachers from all over the US and Canada—many of whom have written the Suzuki books for parents and students that have become standards. Students who can read music can also be in an orchestra. There are two opportunities each day for parents to attend lectures and there are recitals by a guest artist, faculty, students and a talent show that anyone can enter. Add to that time for swimming in the pool with your friends, playing soccer or baseball or just going for a hike. For advanced students there is a two-week chamber music program. Students are placed in chamber ensembles such as string quartets or piano trios, etc. and, in addition to the schedule above, are coached by a faculty member each day.

And then there are our 40th Anniversary events special just for this year! They'll be ice cream and yard games during Sunday registration, free enrichment classes such as Dalcroze classes, Baroque dance, special outdoor play-ins, Wednesday fun night with blowup slides, kayak rides at Schmeekle and a nature program. Molly the Trolley will be giving rides to the Downtown area, special master classes with the Monday night guest artists and lots, lots more.

Who comes to the Institute? Students who play piano, violin, viola, cello, bass, harp and guitar, ages 4-18, from pre-twinkle to beyond the books, from every state in the union and some foreign countries too. Last year we had 3 siblings who brought their children to the institute for a family reunion. They came from New York, Tokyo and California! Many stay in the dorms, the teen dorm, some in the hotels and some camp out. But the best part about being at ASI is that for one week, in this wholesome musical environment, it seems that the whole world is learning to play an instrument and having fun doing it. This is a camp, not for the extraordinarily motivated or the particularly precocious student. Quite the contrary; it is THE place to come to *become* exceptionally motivated or precocious. Many parents say the motivation lasts until

February. Come and experience it yourself and help us celebrate our 40th birthday! Visit www.uwsp.edu/suzuki.



Valentine's Day Gift Idea

Do you know of anyone thinking of purchasing a special piece of jewelry for Valentine's Day? Lee Ayers and Thomas Dailing have added the American Suzuki Foundation to their list of charitable organizations. If you purchase an item designed by Thomas Dailing you can designate the American Suzuki Foundation as the charitable organization to receive 10% of the purchase price. This offer is good throughout the year. Many thanks to Lee Ayers and Thomas Dailing for the "gift that keeps on giving!"

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And the Survey Says....

Teachers offer many ideas each week to help Suzuki families make practice fun, schedule listening time, devise review systems, etc., but parents are a creative bunch and they know how they've tweaked those ideas to work for their children in their family routine.

This column is an opportunity for parents to share their ideas with other parents and your teachers. On the first of each month each teacher will have a half sheet of paper with a question as to how parents put Suzuki principles into action. If you have an idea to share, please write it down. Then on the 20th of the month the suggestions will

be collected and published in the next Ambassador. Pick up an answer sheet from your teacher, or from the bookcase in the ASC waiting room, and share your ideas by returning the answer sheet to your teacher, or drop it in the payment box in the waiting room. Or, join the discussion on our Facebook page! Then check out the next Ambassador's "And the Survey Says..." column to learn what techniques other parents have found works for them.

The question for December was: How, where and when do you listen?

- We listen to our CDs every night before falling asleep.
- We listen in the car and every night as they fall asleep.
- Every day in the car on the way to school.
- I encourage my children to sing along with, or dance to, their music so they're interacting with it.
- When my child is far enough along in the "polishing" stage of a piece, I often encourage them to try to play with the recording and make it sound as unison as possible.
- We put all five CDs of our five instruments in the CD changer and program it to play the polished, working, and immediate next piece for each instrument. Then we play it during breakfast and feel ready for the day. The working pieces get more repeats.
- At dinner we put on professional recordings of pieces such as Bach Double, Vivaldi a minor, Bach unaccompanied Suites, Boccherini Minuet (as a quintet), Beethoven Minuet in G, etc.
- We listen in the van as we travel to and from activities. We also have a copy of the CD in our home in case we miss it in the van – usually before dinner. When the pieces are listened to regularly, it is easier to learn them.
- We listen every day (Monday-Friday) on the way to school in the morning.
- We have the CD playing in their rooms at all times.
- When our oldest kids were very young, I played it out the window in the back yard when they were in the sandbox. Also on car trips.
- Every night from birth, I would play the CD while they were sleeping. Now they listen mostly at bed time, or when having to follow the book with their eyes while listening to the CD.

March's question: What review systems have you used?

Composer of the Month: George Frideric Handel

By Ann Marie Novak

George Frideric Handel was born on February 23, 1685 in Halle, Germany. His father was a surgeon and barber at the duke's court. As a young boy, he was intrigued by the local musicians, but his father would not let him study music because he felt that he could never make a decent living doing so. George was too enthusiastic about music to be held back, though. It is said that, around age 5, he asked an older friend to help him move a clavichord (a very tiny version of a piano) up to the attic, where he proceeded to teach himself to play the instrument. A couple of years later, he begged to go with his father to visit his step-brother, who was the organist at the court of Saxe-Weissenfels. His father refused to take him along, because he felt that the young boy was not old enough to make such a grueling trip. Handel's persistence prevailed, however, and his father permitted him to go. Imagine his father's surprise when the young lad sat down at the organ and started to play quite beautifully! When the duke heard his playing, he remarked to Handel's father that his son was exceptionally talented. His strong support convinced the father to hire a local musician to teach George theory and composition as well as how to play the harpsichord, organ, violin and oboe.



When it was time for Handel to leave home and begin his studies at the university in Halle, he decided to study law (mostly to please his father). But music was still very much on his mind and in his heart. In fact, shortly after he arrived on campus, he was hired to replace the organist at the Calvinist Cathedral. This was the beginning of his adult life as a musician and composer. Soon, he heard of an opening in an orchestra in Hamburg. He auditioned and was hired immediately. It is said that, one day when the conductor was out of town, the orchestra members asked him to fill in and lead the group. They thought that this would be a big joke...to have the new guy get up and probably embarrass himself. But, much to their surprise, Handel was quite good as a conductor!

In 1706, Handel traveled to Italy. He enjoyed his time in the various cities he visited, including Florence, Rome and Venice. While he was there, he wrote a number of operas, cantatas (vocal works with multiple movements based on

a narrative text), keyboard works, and at least one oratorio. The musical life in Italy at that time was very exciting: he rubbed elbows with many of the great composers of that time, including the two Scarlatti's, Corelli, Vivaldi and Albinoni, just to name a few.

In 1710 he arrived on the musical scene in London. He would spend a number of years there, some of them in service in the royal court. But he also traveled back and forth to his homeland as well. It was during this time that he composed the oratorio, "Judas Maccabaeus". In 1717, Handel composed the famous "Water Music" for a royal boat trip down the Thames River. In 1719, a group of noblemen formed the Royal Academy of Music, an operatic venture. He served as director of this institution until its unfortunate dissolution in 1728.

Handel made another trip to Italy in the 1730's. He wrote several more operas while he was there, but these were not as popular as the earlier ones. In 1737, he fell seriously ill and found himself deeply in debt. He returned to England later that year and began work on two more operas. Then, in 1742, in a rush of inspiration, he composed the oratorio, "Messiah" in just 24 days. This most famous and enormous work takes approximately 3 hours to perform. It includes a full choir (with soloists) and a full orchestra. Unbelievably, the first London performance of this work was a flop, but as we know, it went on to become one of the best-known and most-loved works of all time.

In the last years of his life, Handel wrote more vocal works, including other oratorios. He lost the sight in his left eye in February of 1751, but continued to write until the time of his death in 1759. He left us with a total of 45 operas, 31 oratorios, over 100 cantatas, and numerous keyboard and orchestral works.

Sources:

Randel, D. M. (1996). "Harvard Biographical Dictionary of Music". Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Belknap Press of Harvard University.

Kendall, C. W. (1985). "Stories of Composers for Young Musicians". Kendall.



Alumni News

Leslie Zander was the violin soloist in the Heartland Symphony Orchestra's performance of *The Winter*, from Antonio Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*. Leslie has performed with the Heartland Symphony since 2001 and became it's concertmaster in 2007. She has also performed with the Great River Strings Ensemble, and the Lakes Area Chamber Music Festival as well as the Sierra Summer Festival in Mammoth Lakes, CA and the Lake Chelan Bach Fest in Chelan, WA. Leslie is an ASC alumna and teaches middle school orchestra in Brainerd, MN.



Student News

Dinesh and Roshini Traynor were accepted to the Suzuki Association of the Americas Youth Orchestra I. They will rehearse and perform with Suzuki students from around the nation in Minneapolis during the SAA 14th Conference for Suzuki teachers and parents May 27- 30.

Brynn Beversdorf, Dinesh and Roshini Traynor and Prof. Pat played at a benefit for Stephanie Ebben at Michele's Restaurant on Dec. 20th.



Faculty News

Ann Marie Novak and Pat D'Ercole attended the Suzuki Association of Wisconsin's 5th Winter Retreat in Madison. This retreat was the largest yet with 116 and students in attendance from all over the state. ASC students who attended were **Kate Young, Alyssa Schroeckenthaler, Richard Meilahn, Marco Kurzynski, Ada Sell and Barrett Severson.**

Pat D'Ercole taught the *Every Child Can!* course at the SAW Retreat on Jan. 22, 2010.



September 2009 Graduations

Kate Young, Violin Book 3
Tom Felt, Violin Book 3
Teddy Schenkman, Viola Book 6



October 2009 Graduations

Andrew Glazer, Piano Twinkles
Luisa Marion, Violin Book 3
Jon Peck, Violin Book 5
Lauren Sheibley, Violin Book 7
Alex Buehler, Violin Book 7
Zoe Sell, Piano Twinkles
Chassen Selwyn, Cello Twinkles
Sabrina Tang, Violin Book 1
Michael Josephson, Piano Book 6
James Smyth, Piano Book 5

November 2009 Graduations

Ethan Allar, Violin Book 1
Christina Marchel, Violin Book 4
Laura Josephson, Violin Book 7
Naomi Crump, Violin Book 6
Kelly Tillotson, Piano Book 4
Erik Sands, Violin Book 8
Annie Yao, Violin Book 8
Lucia Stephani, Piano Twinkles
Dinesh Traynor, Violin Book 5
Antony Van Tiem, Viola Book 5
Soren Anderson, Piano Book 4
Sarah Harmon, Violin Book 6
Antony Van Tiem, Violin Book 7



December 2009 Graduations

Victoria Miller, Piano Twinkles
Brian Turner, Violin Book 4
Marco Kurzynski, Violin Book 3
Roshini Traynor, Viola Book 5
Josie Reeve, Viola Twinkles

