

# AMBASSADOR

## Aber Suzuki Center

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

**October, 2011**

### Upcoming Events

**Saturday, October 22, 2011**

Marathon, 9am – Noon

**Sunday, October 23, 2011**

Solo Recitals

Michelsen Hall, 2:00 and 3:30 pm

**Saturday, October 29, 2011**

Piano Halloween Recital

Michelsen Hall, 11:00 and 12:30

**Saturday, November 12, 2011**

Music of the Masters

Dreyfus University Center – Alumni Room

Cocktails and Hors d'oeuvres 6:00 pm

Dinner 7:00 pm

Program 8:00 pm

**Saturday, November 19, 2011**

Marathon, 9am – Noon

**Sunday, November 20, 2011**

Solo Recitals

Michelsen Hall, 2:00 and 3:30 pm

**Saturday, December 10, 2011**

Marathon, 9am – Noon

**Sunday, December 11, 2011**

Solo Recitals

Michelsen Hall, 2:00 and 3:30 pm

### From the Director's Desk

By Pat D'Ercole

It's ironic. All around us nature is giving us signs that hibernation is just around the corner—cooler temperatures, shorter days, leaves changing colors—and yet, here at the Aber Suzuki Center it feels like spring. We have new faculty, new students and new programs. There's an excitement in the air as we begin another year filled with eager anticipation of all that the academic year holds — all the music we will create, all that we will learn and the new and old friendships we'll make or renew.

If you were at the September Marathon, then you've already met our two new violin teachers, Jennifer Burton and Oscar Soler. Miss Burton studied with Margery Aber and taught at the Aber Suzuki Center from 1977-93, at the Suzuki Institute of Dallas, and the Burton Suzuki Studio in Dallas and Stevens Point.

Mr. Soler is a native of Venezuela. He studied with Paul Kantor at the Cleveland Institute of Music and has taught Suzuki students at the Sato Center for Suzuki Studies and in Boulder, Colorado. Read more about him in this issue of the Ambassador.

We've also launched the ASC Suzuki Early Childhood Education Program with the University Child Learning and Care Center (UCLCC). This program is designed for children infants to 4 years old and

fosters the development of motor skills and socialization through nursery rhymes, songs and class routines. Parents actively participate in the class with their child and learn how to apply the Suzuki philosophy in observing their child's growth and in their parenting skills. Marge Andersen and Judy Meyer are the teachers and both are veteran Suzuki parents. Both had students who studied violin from preschool through high school. Both are very experienced teachers of young children and have received special training for this class. The class meets on Thursdays from 5:30-6:30. If you know of someone who might be interested, tell them to come and observe for free.

For our students currently enrolled, we've also begun free 4- week group lessons targeted toward a specific playing level at which we have a large concentration of students. Each 4-week session has very specific goals for the class to accomplish. Most Suzuki programs in the U.S. have weekly or biweekly group classes throughout the year. With the high number of two working-parent households and the proliferation of the number of extracurricular activities available to children, we've opted for a "season" approach as athletic departments have. Classes will be offered second semester as well. Let us know how you like them!

Please be sure to mark the ASC calendar dates on your family calendar. Of particular note is the American Suzuki Foundation's Music of the Masters Dinner. Read more about it and other upcoming events in the pages that follow.

On behalf of the faculty and staff, welcome back and best wishes for a great year!



## An Interview with Mr. Oscar

### What are your hidden talents?

I love Latin dance, specifically salsa, and merengue. My mother taught me how to dance when I was younger, and ever since I have found it to be lots of fun. I would say my favorite thing about dancing is the physical movement, and coordination it takes to feel the beat and body come together; it also just looks great!

My wife (Rosie) and I have been looking for a good dancing place in central Wisconsin, and have not found one yet. We have been putting some music on and dancing in our living room, and we have a great time! Do let us know of places to dance if something comes to mind.

### What is your favorite travel destination?

I like going home to family for holidays, wherever that might be. I do not necessarily have a place in mind that I would call my favorite, but I cannot pass up a good time with family celebrating what brings us joy. However, I would love to visit Europe sometime. I have been interested in traveling to France and Spain because of their food and legacy.

### What is your favorite restaurant in town so far?

I would have to say Café 27. They have great affordable food, and a really unique menu.

### What types of music do you like to listen to?

I do not spend much time listening to recordings because I prefer live music. Music has energy that is very hard to capture in a recording, so I have enjoyed great concerts from the Cleveland Orchestra, violinists Gil Shaham and William Preucil, cellist Lynn Harrell, harpist Yolanda Kondonassis, soprano Rennée Fleming, and the Takács String Quartet. These are performances that I remember to be unique in a certain way. I would love to hear violinist Ann Sophie Mutter perform live because her recordings have caught my attention.

I also enjoy listening to jazz occasionally, and hope to be able to freely improvise like some of the artist I have seen in nightclubs because I find

it fascinating to have such spontaneity when making music.

**If someone were visiting Stevens Point, what would you tell them to see or do?**

I would tell them to spend time outside if they can! I have found this town to be very beautiful and peaceful. Taking a walk in some of the green spaces can really take your worries away; I personally enjoy all the trees!

I would also tell them to speak to someone in the community to find out what their story is. I have found talking to people here is much easier than in any other place I have been because people are friendly and open. I have learned a lot from listening to others.

**Do you have any guilty pleasures?**

I love sweets! It is so dangerous for me that I have to keep no sweets in my house; otherwise they would be gone very quickly!

**What is your first music-related memory?**

My sister and I playing Rag Time in a concert together in classroom #7 of my elementary school in Venezuela. My sister is a professional pianist, and we used to play together whenever possible. This performance was one of my first memories of us playing together.

**Where are you from?**

I am from Caracas, Venezuela. I was born and raised in Caracas; however, my parents and two older sisters are from Cuba. They left Cuba around 1960 and went to Venezuela with my mother's aunt. My heritage is Cuban and most of my extended family resides in Cuba today.

**When and how did you decide to be a professional musician?**

I come from a musical family. My father was a professional pianist, and all my siblings (two sisters and one brother) studied piano and guitar for at least six years. My oldest sister became a professional pianist. Music was part of my everyday life and I grew up never seeing myself without it.

I would have to say that I decided to become a professional musician when I was offered a scholarship to come and study in America.

**What do you love most about teaching?**

I could go on for a while answering this question, but there are a few things that I love most. I enjoy sharing what I love doing. My students give me an opportunity to tell them about what I like in playing the violin and making music. I also enjoy making sure that what is being discussed is fully understood. It makes me proud to see students smile and play something back in a lesson realizing they did the assignment correctly. I like that teaching is always evolving; there are never two identical individuals, and therefore my approach must change to meet their needs. I enjoy building relationships with the students and families I see every week, and I like hearing what their motivation behind making music and learning to play an instrument might be.

**What do you love most about the Suzuki method?**

The step-by-step process to music learning is extremely effective. Every piece is designed to introduce a concept that is challenging, yet not overwhelming. Students are learning the fundamentals of violin playing and music learning in a system that is guaranteed to be successful if approached correctly.

The Suzuki method is inclusive and welcomes anybody who has a passion for learning and enjoying the process of developing a skill. The concept that everybody can develop a skill is inspiring to any teacher who is hoping to nurture his students.

I also enjoy the idea that the Suzuki method empowers the families by having parents become the home teachers. This concept makes a family stronger by sharing an activity that creates opportunities to build solid relationships.

**The Aber Suzuki Center is essential to the Central Wisconsin community because...**

During my interview process at the Aber Suzuki Center back in May, I remember I asked the parents present in the public interview to tell me what they value most about the school. One of

the parents mentioned the Aber Suzuki Center is one of the reasons why they have not moved. I am inclined to say there are a lot more families that share a similar feeling because they are able to recognize the value and quality of education offered at the school.

**When not practicing or teaching, what would you be doing?**

Probably cooking, swimming, and spending time with my wife.

**What is your favorite thing about Stevens Point so far?**

Days seem longer. It seems this community enjoys every moment and makes them last a lot longer! They make time to see friends, talk to strangers, and to smile in the process.



**Parent Discussion Group  
During October Marathon**

New and veteran parents are welcome to come and share the joys and challenges of parenting in the Suzuki style during the October Marathon. We'll gather outside of Michelsen Hall near the Music Dept. office about 9:15. Coffee and donuts will be provided. Come when you can and stay as long as you'd like. We hope that the group aspect of marathons will provide parents a chance to learn and grow from each other in just the same way that it does for the students. There will also be an opportunity to peruse recommended Suzuki books. An order blank will be provided for your convenience.



**Mark Your Calendar for the  
Music of the Masters Dinner**

This year the Music of the Masters Dinner will be held on Nov. 12 at the Alumni Room, DUC begin-

ning with cocktails at 6:00p.m. The American Suzuki Foundation (ASF), an independent not-for-profit, whose sole purpose is to support Suzuki education especially in Stevens Point, sponsors this event. Through its fundraising efforts the ASF has provided needs-based and merit scholarships for ASC students, teacher training scholarship for UWSP and ASI teachers-in-training and support for continuing education for ASC faculty.

The Music of the Masters Dinner begins with cocktails and appetizers at 6:00 pm with music provided by string quartets and pianists. During



this time, guests may bid on silent auction items or purchase raffle tickets for the one-of-a-kind necklace created especially for this event by internationally acclaimed designer, Thomas Dailing. The value of the pendant is \$1800. Raffle tickets are \$5.00 each or 3 for \$10 and can be purchased at the ASC office, ASC faculty or from ASF board members.

Music of the Masters Dinner guests will choose from Grilled Salmon with Peach Sauce, Apricot Ginger Cornish Hen or Vegetable Lime Orzo for their meal while pianists provide dinner music or strolling violinists roam from table to table. Following dessert, the evening will conclude with musical selections by various instrumental groups and the Suzuki Singers accompanied by the Central State Chamber Orchestra. The master of ceremonies will be none other than "Franz Schubert" as portrayed by John Knowlton. Please encourage your family and friends who value the benefits of this program to support the Music of the Masters Dinner through the purchase of dinner or raffle tickets or perhaps reserve a table. All proceeds generated provide funds for the needs-based scholarships.

Dinner tickets must be purchased in advance and are \$40 before Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>, \$45 after Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>. Only 150 tickets are available.

The Aber Suzuki Center would like to thank ASF board members Karen Harms, president, Diane

Sands, vice president, Andy Felt, treasurer, Kaushalya Iyengar, secretary, Orsolya Gosztory, Brian and Daniela Kurzynski, Claudia Trimarco, Pat D'Ercole, and Jeff Morin, ex officio who work very hard on this event each year for the benefit our families.



### **Would you like to take longer lessons, but can't afford it?**

Perhaps, in these troubled economic times, you may be wondering if you can even continue to provide lessons for your child. Watch your mailbox! In November, the American Suzuki Foundation will be sending out application for needs based scholarships. This application process is completely confidential. Funds are available. If you have a need, please apply.



### **Taiwanese Students Visit ASC**

If you notice some new people observing your lessons, it could be that they are our visitors from Taiwan. From Oct. 1-23 ASC will host six college early childhood education majors and their professor, Dr. Da-Li Chang and his 7-year-old daughter, Grace.

Dr. Chang is a UWSP alumnus who attended UWSP in 1991-93 and received his master's degree in music education with emphasis in Suzuki. After completing his doctorate at Michigan State University he became professor of music at Kan Shan University in the early childhood education department. He wanted his college students to observe early childhood classes in the US and wrote a grant to bring six of them to the US for six weeks. (Before they arrived in Stevens Point, the students were in St. Louis, MO for 3 weeks.)

The students will be observing students at the University Child Learning and Care Center, the Gesell Institute, the ASC Suzuki Early Childhood Education classes, and lessons at the ASC. In addition, host families, Sheila and Jim Banovetz, Santha Bickford, Dani Lai and Gene Hahn, and Prof. Pat will show them the sights and sounds of Central Wisconsin. For our farewell dinner, we plan to have a Thanksgiving feast a little early. Please watch your email for a message asking for a donation of a menu item for that feast. If you would like to take part in helping with transportation and/or entertaining the students, please contact Prof. Pat.



### **The Aber Suzuki Center Celebrates 45 Years**

Forty-five years ago, in the fall of 1967, Margery Aber began her appointment as the applied violin teacher in the Music Department at UWSP. She had just returned from a tour to Japan sponsored by the American String Teachers Association to investigate this new method of teaching the violin. These methods worked in Japan, but could they work in America?

With encouragement from the Music Department chairman, Miss Aber began a Suzuki program in the UWSP Lab School. Many of you have met some of those students in her very first class—Lorre Trytten who has twice performed some amazing Twinkle variations and other selections at our marathons and John Klein, a favorite teacher among students at the American Suzuki Institute.

Miss Aber's personal experience with Dr. Suzuki and the excitement about having this method in Wisconsin, put UWSP on the musical "map." Early recital programs show that Miss Aber and her Suzuki "kids" gave many demonstrations throughout the state. With her help, teachers were trained and programs were started in Madison, Appleton and Eau Claire. In fact, in 1968 and again in 1969, Dr. Suzuki was invited to give a

weekend workshop to Suzuki students in the state. Many of the UWSP Lab students travelled to Madison and had lessons with the “master” himself, with Miss Aber acting as assistant and translator.

Watch for more ASC history next month.



### **Composer of the Month George Frederick Handel**

**By Ann Marie Novak**

George Frederick 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.



### Studio Mothers Needed

In the welcome letter included with your ASC contract, it was mentioned that the faculty would like to have a volunteer to act as "studio mother" for the year. This would be similar to what used to be called a "room mother" in elementary schools. To date, we have one volunteer, but that's probably because of the lack of information as to what such a volunteer could expect to do.

We'd like to have one parent from each studio to act as a liaison to other parents in the studio to help with organizing such things as receptions or other functions for which we need volunteers (probably mostly through phone calls). The commitment is not expected to exceed more than a few hours each semester. Please contact Christine or Prof. Pat if you are interested.



### Violist Teddy Schenkman Wins CWSO Concerto Competition!

Congratulations to **Teddy Schenkman** who won the Central Wisconsin Symphony Orchestra's Young Artist Concerto Competition held on Sat. Sept. 10. Teddy, 16, studies viola with Mr. Becker and is a senior at Marshfield High School. He will perform Ernest Bloch's "Suite Hebraique for Viola and Orchestra" with the CWSO at 7:30 p.m. on December 3rd and at 4:00 p.m. on December 4th, 2011 at the Theater@1800.

Kudos are also due to violinists **Annie Yao** and **Wade Dittburner**, students of Mrs. Fuller who were runners up. We, at ASC, are proud of the three winners and all the ASC students that auditioned. We are proud of what you have accomplished and that you represented ASC so well!



### Don't Delay! Get Your Tickets for the December CWSO Concert Soon!

Reserve Dec. 3rd or 4th on your calendar and get your CWSO tickets early. Not only is that the date to hear Teddy Schenkman perform with the CWSO, but ASC will be very well represented on that concert by other students as well. Soprano Sam Ginnett will perform the part of Amahl in *Amahl and the Night Visitors* by Menotti. Other singers from Mrs. Hofer's studio will also be in the children's chorus. And ASC students have been invited to provide the music at intermission.



### Student News

The **Aurora String Quartet** (Lucas Chan, Antony Van Tiem, Roshini Traynor, and Natalie Van Tiem) played for the *Children Are The Hope* event on September 24. The group donated their time to

play cocktail music for the event organized to help fund cultural outreach between children in Cuba and the US.

CSCO welcomes the following new students: **Anna Weisbrod, Rachel Ley, Maggie Medo, Christina Marchel, Cal Irons, Lara Prebble, Antony Van Tiem, Trenton Seegert, and Tom Stevning-Roe.**

The ASC Orchestra welcomes new students **Lilly Mahon, Madison DeBot, and Thomas Meronek.**

The Dolce String Orchestra welcomes new students **Tom Felt, Marco Kurzynski, Hope Mahon, Alyssa Schroeckenthaler, Zsanna Bodor and Frederick Van Tiem.**

Ask your teacher when you'll be ready to join one of these ensembles.

Many thanks to all the faculty and students who participated in one of our summer performances!



## September 2011 Graduations

**Toren Anderson, Piano Twinkles**  
**Mary McDonald, Voice Book 1**  
**Trevor Carlson, Piano Book 2**  
**Natalie Berk, Violin Book 1**  
**Sabrina Tang, Piano Book 2**  
**Roshini Traynor, Viola Book 7**

