



Arizona Suzuki Association

Spring 2011

Newsletter

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Performance Review - The Benefits of Performing Works More than Once by Deena Reedy, D. M. A.

With the end of the school year quickly approaching, it is helpful to take a brief moment to look back on the year and examine how far one has come or revisit lessons that have been learned during the year. Although I would enjoy a quieter moment to do said reflecting, most likely some other activity would inevitably appear to fill the "void". So, I guess it's now or never!

Review is something the Suzuki approach includes as one of its main tenants. This is also something I include regularly in lessons, however, some students and/ or parents are more committed to it than others, and this level of commitment is evident in student progress. There is a natural tendency in our culture to keep forging ahead, often never looking back. A tendency to ignore review of foundational skills in pursuit of the next goal, frequently shows up in our musical endeavors, as well. However, as teachers, we must be vigilant to help temper the desire to forge ahead by revisiting a previously learned piece, lesson learned or the like to help our students reap even greater benefits from their efforts.

As a flutist, I would also venture to admit that flutists might have more of this inclination to push forward to the next piece than other instrumentalists, particularly pianists. Memory requirements and conventions often place different demands on these two instrumentalists. That is not to say there is anything wrong with being goal-oriented and driven, wanting to keep moving ahead. However, I've recently been reminded so clearly that the purpose of review is not only to fine tune skills, build on previous knowledge and develop our musical interpretation at a higher level, but it can also help improve our performance skills as well. In short, review is the culmination of every part of play-

ing and performing in which we try to achieve success. Without review, our goals will be much harder to reach.

In the Suzuki repertoire, we have all had moments where a student recognizes a skill from a previously learned piece that returns in a later piece, and it is therefore not as difficult because they already have experience with it. In fact, the Suzuki materials are very carefully crafted to provide numerous such experiences. Because my studio is growing older, I had many students who chose to participate in concerto competitions, honors recital auditions and other recitals this year. These events provided opportunities to perform select pieces more than once within the period of only a few months. In past years, students might perform something once, then revisit it for another event several months later or for their book graduation recital a year or two later. This year, several students had multiple performances within a short period of time. It was really gratifying as a listener to hear the growth from performance to performance, and to see the winning results as well!

I noticed tremendous strides being made in not only technical skills but in musical maturity as well. Of course, as you might expect, confidence in memorization grew with each performance. Overall, the performance presence of these individuals developed remarkably. They commented on their experiences, too, that they felt much more accomplished than when they started the performances, and that little technical issues eventually resolved themselves when given time to develop in performance. Finally, the overall musical direction of the pieces was enriched greatly by repeated performances.

During the course of a very busy school year, it is easy to forget the benefits of multiple performances of the same piece. It is commonplace



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Ideas from Parents as Partners by Mary Wilkening, ASA Past President



Did you have a chance to participate in the “Parents as Partners” on-line symposium sponsored by Suzuki Association of the Americas in January and February? For 6 weeks, SAA put out about 100 videos of teachers and parents speaking about their ideas on teaching and learning in the Suzuki approach. Not all the videos were equally inspiring, but some were excellent. I will summarize some of my favorite ideas below:

Listen Like Maniac: Idea from Michelle Horner, guitar teacher and violin mom:

1. Listen like a Maniac. Listen to your last piece, the new piece, and the next piece each 10 times in a row. With this approach, Michelle’s daughter was able to go through Violin Books 2 and 3 in one year. Burn your pieces on a CD in this order, or make an ipod playlist with all the songs repeated. Immerse the student in music like they are surrounded by language. It is the parent’s job to create a playlist or put on the “repeat button”.

7 Guarantees for More Progress during Practice/ New Year’s Resolutions by James Hutchins

1. The Work Out: Pick one idea to work on such as intonation, posture, straight wrist, tone, vibrato etc. Set a time frame from 3 minutes to 15 minutes. For example, start with Twinkle Variations and play with excellent intonation through each Variation. If there is a problem, student or parent can stop the play and go back and make it right. If that piece is OK, go to the next one until all are played right up to the current piece. Stop at the end of the time frame and resume the next day with the same skill until the student has played all the pieces up to the current piece.

2. State Goals and Why: Let the student

know why he is playing this piece, for example, “The reason we are playing this piece is to make your tone bigger so the people in the back of the auditorium can hear you.”

3. Before practice, be sure to get the “Busy Work” out of the way. For instance, bathroom breaks, snacks etc. Discuss what you will do after practice, before beginning. Don’t spend time during practice on these things. Most kids are freshest in the morning or right after a snack after school.

4. Make it fun: a. Practice in different locations like bathrooms, bedrooms, outside etc. b. Put a piece in a puzzle when a certain number of pieces are played. c. Light a candle and blow it out at the end. d. Attend group lessons, e. Use Practice partners. f. Play the penny game – get a penny for each 3 pieces you play well. g. Ask other parents for suggestions.

5. Review – Every technique in Suzuki builds on a previous technique.

6. Ipod theory – Each performance goes into the ipod of your brain. Listen to the correct ones, not the incorrect ones.

7. Practice makes permanent. Step forward for each correct playing, step backward for each incorrect playing. Try to get across the room. For cellos, move a marker around a Monopoly board. Try to get around the board by playing correctly.

Practice Ideas for new pieces – Lucy Shaw:

Let the child decide with a “yes” or “no” if they have accomplished a goal. Ask them if their bow was “inside the highway” or “Were your fingers on the tapes?” Depersonalize the suggestions with, “Tell your arm what to do”. Apply counter pressure to a sagging “wing” or “raised bow arm” to have the student lean against your pressure in the direction you want him to go.

ASA Fall Workshop on October 21 and 22. Mark your Calendars!

ASA is planning our 2011 Fall Workshop. The theme will be **TANGO!** It will be held at Orangewood Presbyterian Church, 7321 N 10th St. in Phoenix on Friday and Saturday, October 21 and 22 with nationally renowned clinicians, Michael McLean and Derek Snyder, both Tango aficionados. Friday afternoon's session will be offered for advanced students.



Michael McLean

Based in Los Angeles, **Michael McLean** is an internationally noted composer, violinist, and pedagogue. On the faculty at The Colburn School of Performing Arts as a violinist and conductor, he also maintains a lively career as a composer of orchestral, chamber, and film music. He studied violin and composition at Northwestern University and film scoring at the University of Southern California. He has taught violin at the Music Institute of Chicago and at Texas Christian University. Mr. McLean is a popular guest clinician at workshops and Institutes throughout the country, and has been invited to teach and perform in Argentina, Singapore, and Africa. An active member of the Suzuki Association of the Americas, he has studied Suzuki pedagogy with Yuko Honda, Barbara Barber, and John Kendall. Mr. McLean has written over one hundred compositions and has recorded four CDs, *Care to Tango?*, *New World, Pieces*, and *Kokoro*. His Violin Concerto, *Elements*, was recorded by Brian Lewis and the London Symphony Orchestra and was released by Delos in 2006.



Derek Snyder

Derek Snyder began his cello studies at the age of six. He progressed smoothly until Tuesday, 17th March, 1982, when he left his cello behind the family station wagon while waiting for his Suzuki group class. Having fully recovered from the "accident," Derek maintains an active performing schedule. He has appeared as a soloist with orchestras in both the United States and Europe, and as a chamber musician has collaborated with members of some of the country's most exciting ensembles, including the Cavani and Cleveland string quartets and the Cleveland, Detroit, Montreal, and Baltimore symphonies. He is a founding member of The Phoenix Ensemble and cellist in the tango band The Oblivion Project, which explores the music of Astor Piazzolla.

Drawing for free music lessons at the Workshop! Plan to attend!



Teacher's Column

Would you like to be listed on the Arizona Suzuki Association Website as a registered Suzuki Teacher?

**Just register today and send in
your \$10 dues* for 2011—2012**

Name _____

Instrument _____

Address _____

City _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Send this Form and \$10 to Mary Wilkening, 1157 E. Acacia
Circle, Litchfield Park, AZ 85340.

www.azsuzuki.org

***Teachers, Please go to our
website at www.azsuzuki.org to
download a group application
form for your studio. Group rates
are only \$5/family for 10 applica-
tions and fees sent in at the
same time.**

Suzuki Piano of Arizona

The Arizona Suzuki Association – Phoenix Piano Group held its annual Celebration Recital at ASU Katsin Hall on March 5. Forty students performed, many with string accompaniments written by Joseph McSpadden. Pieces were from Book 1 through Book 5 and students ranged in age from four to nineteen. Upon seeing the DVD of the performances, students are having wonderful memories of great performances and a good time. Parents were proud, grand parents were prouder!

Karen Hagberg, Ph.D., came from Rochester, NY, to teach master classes March 22-23. Students progress better when they have the extra coaching from another teacher, especially one with Karen's knowledge and experience.

Twenty students will participate in the graduation recital April 30 with all new students invited to bow. Students graduating have auditioned with their graduation level pieces and will perform their best current piece. Students from the Book 1 graduation piece through Level IV will be represented.

A three day summer camp with Bruce Boiney of Louisville, KY, will be held July 7-9. In addition to daily master classes, students will participate in several enrichment classes. The camp will conclude with a recital at 4:00 on Saturday, July 9.

Piano teachers continue to research together regularly and will have the schedule for next year's classes, recitals and activities completed in June. By Gloria Elliott

Performance Review, Continued from Page 1

to get bogged down in the details of learning our repertoire and about our instrument, and forget about seeing the bigger picture - the final, finished, polished and re-polished work of art that we are conveying through our music. Revisiting pieces that were once hard for us can be an exciting journey, if, when reviewed and performed again, these works are elevated to an entirely new level. On this journey, we inevitably grow as performers, as well. Remember, we can always bring something new to a piece or come to a higher level of understanding of the work simply by taking time to review our *performances* as well as just reviewing *the piece* in a lesson.

Parent's Column, by Bonnie Roesch

While review is an integral part of the Suzuki method and should be done year-round, the summer months when families are preparing for Suzuki Institutes, and/or when private and Suzuki group lessons may be less regular or even non-existent may lead to an increase in the amount of practice time spent on review. Parents and students alike may be looking for ways to keep the process of review engaging and fresh. Here are several ideas to add fun, interest, and new techniques to review practices.

Terry Durbin (guest clinician of ASA's 2009 Workshop) suggested "taking a tour" – playing different pieces in different rooms of the house. The American Suzuki Journal (Fall, 2006 issue) contained a story written by Dena Conzatti entitled "Sir Cadence and the Dragon". All of the pieces in Book 1 are incorporated into this story about Sir Cadence who meets characters such as a bird named Perpetual Motion, a horse named Allegro, and a dragon named Etude. Can you or your child come up with a story of your own?

Other review processes that take additional time when used, but provide variety include "pretend performances" in which the parent announces the performer's name and the piece that will be played and the performer gets to make a grand entrance (yes, between each piece), and "I dance, you dance" in which the parent dances while the student plays and the student dances while the parent (or Suzuki CD) plays. These two ideas are courtesy of my daughter. My son has enjoyed "dinosaur hunt" in which I hide several of his dinosaur toys and then he plays the piece taped to the dinosaur (for younger children the toy can just tell the child what song it wants to hear) each time he finds one. We do this with plastic Easter eggs too. We have mixed in the use of review charts, picking pieces from a hat/purse, sticker creations, and completing a simple puzzle – one piece per piece. Another favorite is the use of cups set up-side-down with a stamp, penny, sticker, or mini candy under each and they get to pick a cup after each piece they play. I also have a pirate game board that ends at a "treasure chest" and they get to roll a dice and move their game piece after playing each piece. Depending on their rolls, they might get to the treasure chest before completing all of their review, but as long as I warn them of this possibility, they don't seem to mind.

Another suggestion by Terry Durbin that can spice up or add variety to the review process is to "renew" rather than review. Several examples of Terry's "renew" ideas are "Twinkle with burps" (a sweeping down bow at the frog on g string between each pitch), "Birdie Twinkle" (a turn on each pitch), "Lightly Robot" (played staccato with a vocal "beep" on the second beat of half notes), "Rhody Goes Minor" (low 2's) and "Rhody Goes to Saudi Arabia (regular 2's with low 1's). Your private teacher can guide you on when these ideas would be appropriate to incorporate into your review practices. Carrie Reuning-Hummel (guest clinician of ASA's 2010 Workshop) suggested getting a collection of paint color and/or fabric swatches and playing pieces with the idea of selecting a color and creating the tone color with one's instrument. Some pieces may use more than one color! Your child may have his own ideas of how to "renew" a piece. Sometimes just playing a piece starting on a different string makes a song more exciting to play!

Happy reviewing/renewing!

TERI Relief Fund for Japan

Arizona Suzuki Association students, families and teachers raised \$859 to send to Suzuki families in Japan affected by the March Earthquake and Tsunami. The money raised will be sent to the Talent Education Research Institute (TERI) Relief Fund in Japan where the money will go not only to Suzuki families, but also to the general relief efforts. Hisami Iijima (ASA Board Member and violin teacher) collected money at her Spring Recital and her students (shown in the picture) send the message "Ganbare Nippon, Arizona Suzuki" which translates to "Stay strong Japan from Arizona Suzuki." Money was donated by participants in VSSA's Spring Workshop, where students folded paper cranes to send to Japan with their donations. Donations were also made by members of the studios of several ASA teachers from around the state. ASA thanks everyone who contributed for their generosity. Ms. Mituko Kawakami from TERI sends the following message, "Thank you very much for all of your efforts to raise funds for TERI. We deeply appreciate you kind arrangements and your warm idea to help the earthquake and tsunami victims."



Students from Hisami Iijima's Studio who donated to the TERI Relief Fund

News from NAU School of Music and NAU Community Dance and Music Academy

Are you going to be in Flagstaff this summer? Access our summer offerings for violin students through the www.nau.edu/academy. Join our weekly group lessons through June and Workshops June 13-16 and June 20-23

CURRY SUMMER MUSIC CAMP AT NAU

2011 CAMP DATES

Junior Camp (7th-9th grade) July 10-16

Senior Camp (9th-12th grade) June 26-July 9

The Curry Summer Music at NAU continues to offer opportunities for musical and social growth through orchestra, sectionals, master classes and a wide variety of elective classes. www.nau.edu/music

“Partners”, Continued from Page 2

1. The teacher should highlight the spots to be practiced and the special notes to be worked on. Indicate the number of times they are to be practiced each day in a square next to the highlighted part. Parents should see that this is practiced as the teacher says.
2. Learn how to communicate in a non-verbal way. An example of non-verbal communication is the Nike swoosh with the words “Just do it” beneath. People don’t like to be told that to do. Students can make themselves their own “Nike sign” to remind them of some “umbrella item” such as a bent thumb. Encourage students to think for themselves and figure out ways to make learning happen.
3. Use a deck of cards. Since cards have numbers and colors, you can use them in different ways. Some suggestions follow: a. You can lay down a card every time the students plays something well, every note that rings in a tonalization, if the bow is straight, if the child’s eyes are on the bow etc. b. You can use the cards Ace to 3 for a piece with four sections. Pull out a card and the child plays that section. There will be 4 repetitions with the 4 suits on the cards. On longer pieces, use more cards for the additional sections. c. Put out cards A – 10 for dynamic levels. d. Put out cards A – 5 for “lanes” for bow placement between the bridge and finger-board.
4. Ring a bell – Ring it if there is a problem. Let the child ring it if there is no problem.
5. Use pictures of a Happy Face for something done well.
6. Use a stuffed animal to inspect the bow hand or position on the instrument.
7. The Value of Serendipity: The Parent is not making all the decisions on what is to be practiced. The child feels he has control over the practice. Use a plastic bag containing descriptions of what is to be practiced such as ringing tone, bent thumb, tall back, highway, dynamics, articulation, vibrato, etc. For review, pick the name of review pieces out of another bag

If you would like more information from Parents as Partners and the Suzuki Triangle, go to our ASA Website at www.azsuzuki.org and click on Events/Parents as Partners.

Suzuki Forum on line

Did you know there is a Suzuki Forum on line to answer all your questions about Suzuki education, teaching, or parenting? Go to www.suzukiassociation.org/forum and get help on any subject.



ASA Board of Directors 2011-2012

The ASA Board for 2011-2012

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If you would like to vote on this slate of ASA Officers, please go to our website www.azsuzuki.org. Follow the voting link on the home page.

How About a Music Camp This Summer?

Here are some suggestions:

1. Curry Summer Music Camp at NAU. Junior Camp is July 10—16: Senior Camp is June 26—July 9. Information at www.cal.nau.edu.
2. Prescott's Chaparral Musicfest String Academy (for Traditional Students) and Suzuki String Academy (For Suzuki Students in Books 1—3); Dates are June 8—10. For more information go to www.chaparralmusicfest.org or call 928-777-8663.
3. West Valley Youth Orchestra Chamber Music Summer Camp with Quartet Sabaku for students in Suzuki Book 3 or above or comparable traditional students. Held in Goodyear June 13—17. See www.wvyo.org for more information.

See www.suzukiassociation.org for more Suzuki Camps



ASA
1157 E. Acacia Circle
Litchfield Park 85340



**ASA Fall Workshop: Tango! with
Michael McLean and Derek Snyder, October 21-22, 2011**