



Newsletter



Palouse Suzuki Strings

October 2008

The Learning Curve—It's Really a Spiral! (or, How To Learn To Love The R-Word) by Becky Miller

This article is to help parents and maybe some older students understand better why we keep insisting on *review* of pieces you already know. It is a vital part of the Suzuki method, and indeed of all effective learning. Just consider the model that inspired Dr. Suzuki in the first place; the ability and process by which your child and all children learn to speak. It's absurd to think that we would abandon all old vocabulary when we learn new words (although we do learn to pronounce better, and we may replace primitive or infantile words with more mature ones).

We are used to thinking of learning as a bell-like curve with an upward slope and a peak. Try to imagine instead that it is an upward-moving spiral. When we learn new pieces and techniques, and then cycle around to play our former pieces again, they can be brought to a new level. Sometimes this process takes place so seamlessly that the child doesn't even notice. It is then useful to point out, "Do you remember how hard this used to be for you? Isn't it exciting that you are able to do this so easily now?" If they (or you!) chafe at the teacher's continual review assignments, take a moment to celebrate how far you've come.

Remember, too, that if we are always working at the edge of our competence, it can lead to tension and bad physical habits. Review of comfortable material is useful for noticing and working on awkward or inefficient motions, and concentrating on the beauty of the sound, rather than struggling to put together the bowings and fingerings. We all marvel when we see older students playing Book One, Two, and Three material with such ease and beauty. This happens because of review! Building a repertoire of memorized (or really, *internalized*) pieces expands the brain, technique, and musicality.

It is possible for the spiral to become a tedious, flat circle, with no apparent progress. To avoid this, try some of the following:

- ♪ Do the review piece in a different key or position
- ♪ Try it with no open strings
- ♪ Play with eyes closed or on a fixed point, to focus on the ear
- ♪ Record it!
- ♪ Play the bowing backwards (reverse up and down)
- ♪ Play a piece or section at three different tempos
- ♪ Play it pizzicato (plucking)
- ♪ Play it on "air" violin (it will be perfect!)
- ♪ When you're ready, try it with the CD or an accompanist
- ♪ Pick out a particular note to focus on. Make sure that note is always in tune, has vibrato, has a "ring", or maybe even put in an accent
- ♪ This is a challenge: Play the piece as many times in a row as your age!
- ♪ Play a review assignment (or even a whole book) for your pets, stuffed animals, or your family

One studio has a protocol of playing your last three pieces daily, plus a selection of earlier pieces. It is useful to have a routine of some kind, even if it's only picking the titles out of a hat or jar. Make a goal of incorporating more review into your practice life, even if it seems to slow down the learning of new pieces. You will eventually learn them better and faster, and with more skill and beauty.

November PSS Calendar

3	Rep/Read	
	Parent Forum 1 st hour	Moscow
10	Rep/Read	Pullman
17	Solo Day	Moscow
24	No Classes Happy Thanksgiving	

SAWS FROM A STUDENT’S PERSPECTIVE:

Suzuki Festival a Success
by Morgan Vanderwall

In the middle of Washington something exciting was about to happen. One hundred and twenty violin, cello, and viola Suzuki students had gathered for the Suzuki Association of Washington State (SAWS) festival. The event occurred in Ellensburg, Washington on October 11th and was a great chance for students to get new ideas from new teachers.

On the 10th the teachers had training classes to give them ideas to teach. But on the following morning all the students gathered at Central Washington University for an opening concert. After the concert they went to their wide variety of classes including repertoire, technique, fiddling, and master classes.

After lunch, there was a parent forum, where parents talked about new practicing ideas. Next, some of the students took part in a graduation concert. Those students that have sent in a tape and passed get a trophy.

When all the parents and students go home all of them should be inspired and try even harder to be the best they can be.

Friendships form in Ellensburg. “I take my kids to Ellensburg because we enjoy meeting up with friends we have gotten to know over the years,” says Allison Willoughby.

There was one negative comment. “The fiddling class was so boring, and the teacher only played slow songs,” said Madison Vanderwall. Madison, who is nine, did like most of her classes. “I liked the Graduation concert because I got a trophy and it is taller than the one I got last year!”

**Suzuki Association of
Washington State Graduates**

Level I
Rebekah Heo

Level II
Johann Joo
Ji Yoon Shin
Madison Vanderwall
Morgan Vanderwall

Level III
Katie Hindman
Myoung-Jun Kang
Ji Yoon Shin

Level IV
Emily Witthuhn

Book Recital

Rebekah Heo October 18 Book 2

Congratulations!!

SAWS FROM A TEACHER’S PERSPECTIVE:

PSS faculty and students enjoyed a wonderful weekend at the annual Suzuki Association of Washington State fall festival in Ellensburg, October 10-11. On the 10th, Washington violin teachers enjoyed a free-wheeling teacher workshop with master clinician Lamar Blum, while the cello teachers were dazzled by cello teaching legend Gilda Barston. On the 11th, the teachers were joined by students all over the state of Washington for a day of

workshops and performances. PSS kids past and present included **Jae Young Heo, Rebekah Heo, Gabryal Conley, Morgan Vanderwall, Madison Vanderwall, Jonna Sobeloff-Gittes, Myong-Jun Kang, Bridget Scoles, Erin Whitthun, Rachel Whitthun, Gavin Scoles, Hannah Young and Kezia Bauer.** All agreed that the workshop was extremely valuable. –*Jonathon Cheskin*



Coming Events.....

Parent Forum: Elizabeth Young will facilitate the **November Parent Forum on November 3rd, at 3:45 pm, in Moscow.** Elizabeth is a long time Suzuki Coach to two talented young ladies. One of her girls is off to Conservatory, and the other is still playing here in Moscow as a member of Greater Palouse Youth Orchestra. Obviously, she has been successful! She has helped with our Parent Forum before and always comes with some grand ideas! All are welcome, new and experienced parents alike.

APPLEBEE'S FUNDRAISER

On Saturday, December 6th, Applebee's is hosting a fundraiser for Palouse Suzuki Strings. They will cook a

pancake breakfast from 8-11 AM. The cost is \$6.50 per meal, which includes a drink. Our group gets to keep \$5.00 for each meal that is sold. The only thing we will need to do is to provide servers that morning. They estimated we would need 5-6 adults on-site to help the kids. We don't have to cook! They will also be providing tickets for us to sell before the breakfast. **As an incentive, we will have a drawing for two \$50 gift cards from Walmart. To be entered in the drawing a student (or parent) would need to sell 10 tickets.** For every 10 tickets sold you can be entered in the drawing for the gift cards. We will be asking for volunteers for that morning, so watch for a sign up sheet!—Thanks!

Community Events

Washington Idaho Symphony Concert II
Saturday, November 1, 2008 8:00 p.m. Gladish Auditorium
Sunday, November 2, 2008 3:00 p.m. Lewiston High School

Tuesday, December 2, 2008
Auditorium Chamber Music Series: Fountain Ensemble
7:30 p.m. UI University Auditorium

Saturday, December 6, 2008
Greater Palouse Youth Orchestra
7:30 p.m. Lionel Hampton Recital Hall FREE!

Washington Idaho Symphony Concert II
Saturday, December 13, 2008 8:00 p.m. Gladish Auditorium
Sunday December 13, 2008 3:00 p.m. Lewiston High School

STRING SHOPPE

Otto Ernst Fischer 1/4 size violin, \$379, payments possible. Contact Claudia Guzman at 509-334-1956

1/2 size Palatino Cello with soft case and bow, also new string set. \$300. 509-334-0324, jeeheeheo@hotmail.com

Strings for full-size cello. C/G Jargar Cello, A/D Larsen Cello, \$80, jeeheeheo@hotmail.com 509-334-0234

Suzuki Books, Cello Volume I and Volume II, \$4.00 each. jeeheeheo@hotmail.com 509-334-0234

1/8 size Shimro Cello made in 2001, \$350, Contact Ann Saberi at 509-432-3335

1/2 size Suzuki Cello made in 1990. \$425. Contact Jessica Kirkland at 883-0530

1/2 size violin, \$300. Contact Carla Bennett at 509-334-5603

1/2 size RL Ray violin with bow and case, big sound. \$400. Contact Allison, 208-882-0656 alwillow@moscow.com

1/2 size Romanian violin with upgraded bow/case. Very nice, refined sound, \$700. Allison Willoughby, 208-882-0656 alwillow@moscow.com

1/2 size Kyoto Suzuki Cello (anno 1993) with bow and soft case. Good condition. \$300. Please call Wendy at 882-6296 or email wsb@moscow.com.

3/4 size Grygor Petrov Bulgarian Violin in excellent condition. Shoulder rest included. \$500. Call Wendy at 882-6296 or email wsb@moscow.com.