

Newsletter

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Suzuki Weekend

At Shenandoah

Carol Dallinger of Indiana, one of the nationally known faculty members at SAGWA's Shenandoah weekend, works with student Danielle Peck. Capacity enrollment, great faculty, and stunning location added up to a memorable weekend.

Having a Great Home Recital

Suggestions for Parents

by Julie Gorka

Home recitals are a unique and wonderful event for young musicians. A student has the experience of preparing a long program (as opposed to studio recitals, where generally only one or two pieces are performed) for the people he knows and loves best, on his own piano in his comfy home. It's a celebration, a rite of passage, an acknowledgement of closure.

Generally a good time to have a home recital is at the end of a Suzuki book. Many also have Twinkle recitals for young children at the end of the Twinkles when a boost is really needed.

Teachers may have individual guidelines for recitals. My own are only that there has to be a program and that there must be at least one invited person who does not live in the house. Beyond that the sky is the limit. This is a student's chance to choose. My students have had varied types of recitals. One family had a formal buffet dinner and invited friends,

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grandparents, the school teacher, and the minister. Another was like a neighborhood birthday party; the room was full of wiggling, shoeless kids. One very shy girl had one friend and some Beanie Babies to watch her recital.

A home recital should, first of all (musical preparation aside), be what the student wants it to be. Resist the urge to make the recital what YOU want it to be. Discuss the possibilities with your child, and find out how she'd like to do it. Does she want lots of people or just a few? Who? Many families time their recitals to coincide with a grandparent visit. Grandparents are the ULTIMATE recital guests, guaranteed supportive and well-behaved, beloved by the child, camera in hand--what more could a student want?

If your child is young, it's best not to invite more than one other child. Some young children have short attention spans, can be ruthless or giggly about mistakes, and can be disruptive--their "audience skills" aren't well developed yet. If possible, the child's parent should stay to help teach correct recital behavior.

Teens often want to include peers, especially other music students. They may want to combine efforts to include some ensemble music in the program, even creating a string quartet or a rock band.

If it's at all possible, let your child dictate how the recital should be run. If she says she wants to wear her pretty sea-horse bathing suit, that's fine (unless she's 17, and then I would worry!). Her bathing suit would not affect the quality of the music. If she wants her favorite dessert afterwards, or wants a bunch of roses at the end, or doesn't want to dress up, or wants it to be video-taped, or wants the guests to dress "punk," why not? Let go of your preconceptions of what a recital should be and go with it. A happy performer is a confident performer. A student should have ownership of her own musical education whenever possible, and at a home recital, it's very possible.

Remember, a graduation recital is not a test. The level was completed at the student's lessons. The recital is a celebration not an exam: the Emerald City at the end of the Yellow Brick Road. It should be approached with pride and inspiration.

A student who has chosen music as a career would have a different kind of recital in style. The other guests would probably include other music students, teachers, and musicians, besides family and friends. Parents may even chose to rent a small recital hall with an excellent piano (for piano students); this is a great way to show your support of your child's choice of career.

Preparing for the Home Recital

Weeks before the recital, discuss with your child's teacher what the teacher's requirements are. Should the child perform all the pieces in the book, or only some? Can he play pieces from outside the repertoire or original compositions? What order should the pieces be in? Do non-Suzuki pieces need to be memorized? Chose a

date. Make sure the teacher is aware of any piece that isn't quite up to snuff--during a lesson it isn't always possible to hear all the pieces on the program. Keep track of how often each piece is played and which ones need the most work. Many students love an Olympic-style scoring system and enjoy watching a 6.5 piece turn into a 9.8!

Decide with your child who the guests are going to be. Send out invitations; they can follow the theme of the recital if you like. Decide about food: will there be any? Most recitals include food for the guests. Some families have Thai dinners or barbecues following the recital. Others might serve tacos, fondue, or turn into an Irish music party and dance.

Do you want to tape or video-tape the recital? If the performer is uncomfortable with the idea, don't do it. However a tape is nice to send to grandparents who live in Iceland.

Make up your programs. The child can write up the program by hand (my student Anna made a beautiful arty program that I really ought to frame) or use the computer. A recital can be dedicated to someone, a parent, the teacher, a musical grandparent, an ancestor, a favorite pet. I think programs should follow the standard format because it's a great way for kids to know how things are done. It brings attention to the composer, the opus number, and the way movements of sonatas and sonatinas are written. The student

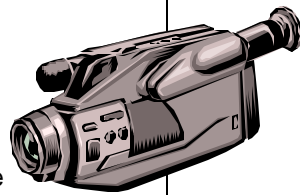
may want to announce the fact that there should not be applause between movements of a sonata or concerto.

Usually it's a good idea to start with one of the easiest pieces, even one from a previous book. There are several ways of deciding the order of the pieces. Some kids (and their teacher) prefer to keep them in the order they appear in the Suzuki books. You could also group pieces together, such as grouping the Book 2 (piano) Bach Minuets. Or you could choose to divide up the pieces for interest, making sure that each piece is different from the one before it. It's a good idea to end with a favorite one that shows off the student's special abilities or was a real milestone in his progress. And an encore? Why not? Prepare the audience; make sure they know to ask for it.

The student should decide whether or not she wants applause after each piece or only at the end. Will a parent or the teacher introduce the student before she plays or will she introduce herself?

Whether or not you chose to clean your house and dress it up, the most important item to take care of is the musical instrument. A lovely luncheon buffet with matching napkins, and an out-of-tune piano with two broken notes really shows where your priorities are. Make sure the instrument is in good repair and in tune.

Above all, have fun! If you, as the parent, are nervous and all keyed up about the recital, please relax or pretend to be relaxed. Be supportive of your young musician and make it an event that will be remembered for a long time.



Elections for SAGWA Board Held

Elections for SAGWA's board of directors were held at our annual meeting on October 31. Before introducing them to you, however, we would like to thank outgoing board members Carolyn Barret (who resigned this fall), Linda Gutterman, Susan Johnson, and Della Mackert. The new board voted to honor Linda's 10 years of service on the board by granting her life-time membership in SAGWA.

As a result of the elections, Martha Shackford will serve another two-year term. The new board members are:

Meredith Heinemier, Arlington, VA. Meredith has maintained a private studio in Arlington for six years and received her Suzuki training from Michiko Yurko, Françoise Pierredon, and Doris Harrel. As a teenager, she studied with Florence Giralmo, author of the textbook series "Piano for Pleasure." She has attended many Suzuki workshops and institutes, both as a teacher and a parent (flute and violin). Meredith helped to plan the five-piano performance for last fall's Suzuki Centennial Celebration concert. She is one of five local teachers organizing a three-piano concert for February 2000. Meredith holds a B.S. in Russian language from George Washington University. She has had careers as an analyst of Soviet affairs and as a realtor before becoming captivated by the Suzuki method. She has a special interest in convincing American parents to get an "earlier start" for their children.

Lerna May Frandsen, Washington, DC. Lerna hails from Iowa City, Iowa, and the Preucil School of Music, where she received Suzuki instruction with Doris Preucil and Sonja Zeithamel. Her background includes Suzuki performances throughout the Midwest, Suzuki teacher training, and studies in early childhood music. Since moving to Washington, DC, she has performed with the Georgetown Symphony Orchestra, freelances in the Greater Washington, DC, area, and maintains a private studio. In addition to her career as a musician, Lerna is president of Entertainment and Literary Management, Inc., and serves as manager of the Umoja String Quartet, formerly known as the Kinara String Quartet.

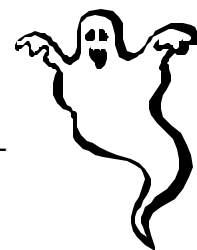
Lee Yang, Germantown, MD. Lee runs his own retail business on the Internet and also hosts Web pages. He taught physics at Kansas State University where he received his doctorate, taught chemistry at the University of Houston where he was a postdoctoral fellow in computational biology, and directed a small research group at Iowa State University where he was a staff scientist in materials science. He supervised two postdoctoral fellows and published 20 research articles in computational sciences. Lee is an enthusiastic Suzuki parent of a five-year-old violin student Joyce Yang who currently studies with Beth Taylor in Germantown and previously studied with Julianna Chitwood in Rockville and with the program of Ronda Cole and Martha Shackford at the University of

Maryland. Lee played flute in China for one year as a child. He is a room parent for Joyce's French Immersion kindergarten class at an elementary school where he and his wife are volunteer coordinators.

In addition, **Karen Christensen, Reston, VA,** will fill the remaining year of the position vacated by Carolyn Barrett. Karen has been a teacher of both Suzuki and traditional piano for 12 years. Two years ago she opened her own Suzuki piano studio in Reston. Now that the studio is up and running, she is becoming more active in contributing to the Suzuki community, which has been such a positive influence in her teaching. She has completed teacher training courses with Yasuko Joichi, Mary Craig Powell, and Doris Harrel, and continues her studies each summer. She holds a degree in chemical engineering from Ohio State and one in piano performance from George Mason University. Karen is also the treasurer of SAGWA's Piano Division and chairs the Northern Virginia Music Teachers Association Alma Grayce Composition Festival.

Spooky Suzuki Performers Entertain Retirement Home Residents

While parents and teachers attended SAGWA's annual membership meeting on Halloween, approximately 35 violin, flute, cello, and piano students performed for the residents of Paul Spring Retirement Community in Alexandria Virginia. Students were decked out in their Halloween best and provided the residents with refreshments following the performance.



The casual concert received rave reviews from the residents and their activities director, who urged us to come back again.

SAGWA's board of directors would like to thank all the parents, students, and teachers who volunteered their time to help bring some fun to the seniors at this home. What a great way for the students to learn about sharing the joy of music.

Teachers Looking for Students

If you have friends or neighbors who are new in the area, please have them call (202) 723-1237 for SAGWA's Suzuki teacher referral help. They will be given the phone number of one of the non-teaching parents who is able to answer questions and has up-to-date teacher information.

Also, the following Suzuki teachers have studio space available for new students. Teachers are listed by instrument with one-word descriptions for studio requirements (Inter - interview required; Aud = audition required; Obser = Observation required; minimum age and maximum age for beginning students). If you want your name to appear on this list, you must submit separate Teacher Referral Forms for *each* issue of the newsletter. (You can find the half-page form in the back of this newsletter.) The deadlines for submitting this form are the same as for news items (see schedule on last page).

Violin

Jenny Oaks Baker, 7810 Ashley Glen Rd. Annandale, VA 22003, (703) 573-6269

Interview
Ages 3-Adult

Cello

Miriam Bolkosky, 9809 Montauk Ave., Bethesda, MD 20817, (301) 571-2172

Audition; Observation
Ages 4-Adult

Piano

Gina Denny, 7229 Garland Ave., Takoma Park, MD 20912, (301) 270-2226

Ages 4-Adult

Piano Workshop
Violin/Viola Teachers
Standards Meeting

Jan. 22-23

Mar. 5

Piano Workshop Reminder

January 22-23

Vienna, Virginia

All piano families should have received information from their teachers about SAGWA's Piano Workshop. This workshop includes master classes with well-known teachers from from the Midwest and the East Coast. Although the registration deadline was December 15, you might be able to register if there is still room. Call Meredith Heinemeier at (703) 524-8757 for information.



SAGWA Board of Directors and Committees

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Secretary:	Meredith Heinemeier (703) 524-8757
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Newsletter Editor:	Carol Preston (703) 941-6744
Teacher Referral:	(202) 723-1237
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String Division Chair:	Martha Shackford (703) 356-1280
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GWSI Treasurer:	Florence Kwok (703) 256-3031
GWSPI Director:	Linda Gutterman (703) 979-6635
Web Master:	Alfred Kromholz (703) 476-6654

Membership and Subscription Information

SAGWA yearly membership dues are \$25.00 per family (financial assistance available.) The number above your name on the newsletter mailing address indicates the date your SAGWA membership expires. To renew your membership, fill out the Membership Form included in this newsletter. Please send all corrections IN WRITING (a postcard will do) to Linda Gutterman, SAGWA Membership Chair, 307 South Jackson Street, Arlington, VA 22204.