



Suzuki Association of Indiana News

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Elizabeth Efroymsen-Brooks

This issue is supposed to be about practicing tips. I am going to change the topic around just a bit and make this article about practice tips for teachers.

Do teachers “practice” (pun intended) what they preach? How often do we make practicing a priority in our lives? We can rightly protest that we have such busy lives and there literally is just no time - unless we have to panic practice music for a performance.

The reasons why we need to practice are the same as the reasons our students have to practice - to improve and to grow as a musician. Do we practice our scales? Do we practice etudes? Do we review our old pieces in order to gain mastery?

Here are my tips for practicing:

Practice every day if possible and make practicing a priority. If you have to choose between cleaning house and practicing - practice. The gym and practice - practice (it uses calories according to my Fitbit). If you have to choose between watching your favorite show and practicing (hard one if it is Project Runway for me) - you know what!

You may skip practicing if:

- You had a five hour rehearsal that day (not good for the hands)
- You are pretty sick (wouldn't practice that well anyway)
- Your pets or your children are sick and need you
- You have no groceries and your relatives are coming to visit
- You get the idea

About four years ago I started a routine of trying to practice 2 hours a day (broken into two 1 hour practices each).

- I start with a scale, which I play with a tuner because I want to work on my intonation.
- I play a Popper Etude or some other advanced Etude. At this time, I may also work on a orchestra passage or an upcoming gig music.
- Practice my current piece. I am trying to do advanced repertoire right now.
- Practice a review piece (this gets left to the last and I don't always get there)

Do I practice every single day? No... in fact I didn't practice today but I did play 1.5 hours with my adult cello group and that involved a lot of sight reading). But I manage about 5 out of 7 days to practice at least an hour every day. And my playing has greatly improved.

I am just asking all your Suzuki teachers to ask yourself the question we all ask our students : "Did you make time to practice your instrument?" Something to think about.

SAI REPORTS

Teacher Talks

by Jillian Chrisman



The first teacher talk was held in Greenfield on September 14. Jillian Chrisman and Marilyn Watkins were co-hosts. Diana Hummel drove in from Richmond. Although Marilyn, being new to Suzuki and SAI, and Diana did not know each other, they soon discovered they both knew the same family from attending the Bloomington string program a number of years ago. This family is still dear friends of the Watkins family.

Diana remembers this family fondly from the days when her daughter was also in the Bloomington program. It was fun to see them find this connection. And I had wondered how two strangers were to enjoy a lunch together! Suddenly they were old friends! We enjoyed our time together tremendously.

In October the teacher talk was held at Yiayia's pancake house in Greenwood. Rachel Gries and Jillian were co-hosts. Liz was able to make it too. All three of us recognized that we needed a moment to exhale and this was it. Rachel is very active with the Carmel Symphony and the Indianapolis Baroque Orchestra. I learned more about her precious children too. Rachel is an amazing parent.



In November, the lunch was to be co-hosted by Jillian and Ann Sloan. Sadly because of illness and schedule changes, Ann was unavailable. Liz and Jillian enjoyed the one on one time and discussed just about everything under the sun. I'm glad I had the opportunity to get to know Liz on a more personal level. Her kindness and generosity are boundless.

We are all BUSY! But I encourage everyone to have a meal with another Suzuki teacher, perhaps someone you may not know well. Your investment of time will be well rewarded.

Our next teacher talk is on the north side on Saturday, December 10th at Clay Terrace (146th and Keystone) at the Corner Bakery. Yes, it is a busy time of year but I encourage any who can join us that it will be a great mini-get away filled with good conversation. Co-hosts will be Liz and Jillian. Liz will arrive around 3:30, Jillian closer to 4:00.



2016 Central Indiana Play-In

The central region held a fall celebration play-in to honor Dr. Suzuki. Teachers in attendance were, Liz Efroymsen (cello), Ann Sloan (piano), Rachel Gries, Candida Wiley and Sharon Neufeld (viola & violin), Jillian Chrisman, Marilyn Watkins, and ??? (violin) and Stephani Hall (harp). It was held at the beautiful Artsgarden in downtown Indianapolis at 5 p.m on November 13, 2016.

It was very enjoyable hearing the different instruments. Several families in attendance had children studying different instruments. These families expressed a joy that their children participated in this event together. There



were several pianists, two harp students, nary a viola student, and about twenty violin students.

Teachers took turns speaking to the families and shared their favorite Suzuki philosophy, quote or story. Sharon, Rachel and Candida played a beautiful viola trio. The play-in ended with the Bach Double and it was exciting to have two students join the group of teachers in this performance.

Afterwards, children skipped about and parents were smiling. I complimented the parents of the very young harp player (who was probably four years old). They smiled and said that they were so very happy she was awake when it was time to play! As a Suzuki teacher I certainly understand that, as I know many of you do as well!

Although several studios involved had been unusually busy this semester, the attendance was quite nice. Thank you to everyone who came and played and made this year's SAI play-in a wonderful moment to treasure!

TEACHER SPOTLIGHT: JOE KALISMAN

Meet Joseph (Joe) Kalisman, a Suzuki cello teacher from Fort Wayne, Indiana. Joe has been a member of the well regarded Fort Wayne Philharmonic Orchestra since 1986 and the manager of its Youth Orchestra Program from 1997-2009 and again from 2014 to the present.

Joe had a very interesting introduction to the Suzuki method. When he was in high school, his cousin was enrolled in one of the very first Suzuki classes for 3 year olds in New York City. This was in 1965. She even had a private lesson with Dr. Suzuki himself when he came to visit the United States. Joe was playing traditional cello at that time, but this experience planted a seed that later came to fruition.

Forward to college – From 1969-1974 and 1980-1984, Joe attended Hartt College in Connecticut, where he continued with his traditional lessons. From 1984-1986 Joe went on to work on his graduate degree at the Pennsylvania State University. It was there he was contacted by the State College Talent Education Association who was looking for a Suzuki cello teacher, They offered him the job and paid for his Suzuki training. So off he went to Ithaca College in the summer of 1984, where he spent time observing Carey Beth Hockett, Sally Gross, Nancy Hair and other Suzuki violin and cello teachers.

His first formal training was in 2009 when he was hired by Janet and Bill Klickman, directors of the Fort Wayne Suzuki Talent Education Academy. Since then, he has studied with Nancy Hair, and later with Grace Field.

Janet Guy-Klickman and Bill Klickman have a thriving Suzuki Education program. At present, Joe has a studio with three 5 year old students and two high school students. The Fort Wayne program also has a chamber program and Joe has a 15 year old who plays in a chamber group. That student, Jeremiah Tsai, was his first Suzuki student and has studied with him since he was 8 years old.

Joe had an “aha” teaching moment which recently gave him additional insight into being a Suzuki teacher. A five year old was being contrary and difficult. Halfway through the private lesson this student said: “ I don’t like this chair - this chair is a baby chair”. Joe said :” Ok, let’s try a different chair - a bigger chair. His toes barely touched the floor, but Joe put the end pin all the way out and he was able to sit fairly comfortably with the cello in the larger chair. All of a sudden the child smiled and changed his attitude and the rest of the lesson proceeded beautifully. He just wanted to be a grown up!

Joe Kalisman realizes that there are a lot of exercise and etude books out there, but he doesn’t feel that parents need to spend a lot of money buying them. Teachers can make an “exercise” out of the current piece students are playing. For instance, pieces have arpeggios, scale segments, sequences and broken thirds. Teachers can assign these “segments” as an alternative to scales or arpeggios. In regards to pitch and tone, he has students pretend there is a fermata over each note of a certain phrase and has them practice that phrase slowly to listen to the quality of the tone and the pitch.

So... I hope we all continue to connect with our fellow Suzuki teachers and have “aha” moments of our own.

TEACHER TIPS: PRACTICING

Sharon Neufeld: For 16th note passages, I have found the "Magic Rhythms" to be essential and, well... MAGIC! Using this practice technique cuts down the amount of practice time and frustration significantly, and cements the notes like nothing else I've tried (including metronome work, which I LOVE).

The Magic Rhythms are as follows:

1. LSLS

2. SLSL

3. LSSS

4. SLSS

5. SSLS

6. SSSL

"L" stands for "Long note", "S" stands for "Short note". For instance, rhythm #1 would end up sounding like a dotted 8th & 16th (or dotted quarter & 8th if playing very slowly).

Playing passages with these rhythms forces the brain to have to process the notes differently each time, which ends up making the original straight rhythm work very easily. Try it out if you haven't already... It's amazing!

I introduce the Magic Rhythm concept on Gossec Gavotte for all of the 16th notes (as a preview before working on the whole piece), but I only teach the student the 1st 2 rhythms at this point. (I wait until the Seitz movements in Book 4 to introduce the remaining 4 rhythms.) These first two rhythms are also great for: Hunter's Chorus, Handel Bourree, Witches Dance ending (modify for triplets), Lully Gavotte (middle section).

In combination with the Magic Rhythms, I have also found staccato slurs to be very helpful for slurred 16th note passages. This is practiced like an up-bow staccato, but also applies to down bows. This really helps the left & right hand line up rhythmically.

Stephanie Hall: Backwards practice! I've been using this more myself and with my students, who tend to always start at the beginning of the piece:) Play the last measure or last phrase, and once you are satisfied with it, then add on the previous measure or phrase. This way you work backwards until you reach the beginning. The end is solid and I find that students play very confidently if they have practiced a pieces this way. It also challenges them to be aware of the form of the piece in a new way!

Leilah Smith: I think practice methods vary based ability levels and maturity.

For older, more advanced kids, I have them use a practice method straight from Juilliard for new pieces. (A student of Dr. Bill Grubb relayed this method to me and I use it quite often myself!) It's similar to magic rhythms..

1.) Set the metronome at 60 bpm. Play every note as if it were a whole note, no matter the actual rhythm. Focus on tone.

2.) Play everything as if it were a half note.

- 3.) Play everything as if it were a quarter note.
- 4.) Play everything as if it were eighth notes. (Sometimes, if the piece is mostly 16th notes, I will add a 16th note variation).
- 5.) Put the actual rhythms back in and play it through at 60 bpm. Depending on the difficulty, you can either bump the metronome up 2-5 bpm and restart the process or introduce the penny game.

The Penny Game (or treats for younger ones)

This is a great practice method for musicians of all ages and ability levels. It helps visualize your goal and see your progress immediately.

- 1.) Stack 3 pennies on one side of the music stand.
- 2.) For each repetition done with no mistakes, move a penny to the other side. If you made a mistake, that repetition doesn't count and they do not get to move a penny.
- 3.) When all 3 pennies have reached the other side, bump the metronome up 3-5 notches and repeat until the song is up to tempo.

Hope that helps!

NEW FEATURE: CLASSIFIED ADS

Rachel Gries: I have a friend, Jessica Becker, who is selling a violin. It is a Roth from 1994. She used it as a student instrument, and she has another one she plays on regularly now. The violin has a mellow sound, and she would like \$800 for it. The violin is currently in Indianapolis, but she does get to Northern Indiana to visit family regularly. She can be contacted at [574-903-0350](tel:574-903-0350) or jlbecker30@gmail.com

If you would like to submit an advertisement for a Suzuki-related item, please email indianasuzuki@gmail.com. Items sold by a non-SAI member (teacher or associate member) will be listed for a small fee.

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