

UVMC Orientation: Suzuki Method Basics

2007-2008

Goal

The goal of the Upper Valley Music Center's Suzuki Program is to provide the best Suzuki education possible for children and parents by using the Suzuki method of teaching.

Suzuki Philosophy

Shinichi Suzuki's goal (1898-1998) was not just to teach people how to play musical instruments, but also to build a well-rounded personality through musical experience. Suzuki believed that every human being has a talent and success depends only on how we teach and provide resources to each student. Even students that are doing their best may not know how to achieve their goals but with a proper learning environment and instruction, any student is capable of success.

The Suzuki method is based on the language acquisition process (mother tongue method). Infants learn their native language by listening, repeating and interacting with those around them on a daily basis. A baby usually tries imitating the way parents speak. By building small steps, the child learns to speak and gradually masters complex words and phrases. Suzuki applies this same method in musical teaching. Each subsequent technique builds on the ones that have preceded it so children gradually learn more quickly. The intimate interaction between parents and children also gives the student confidence, enjoyment, and motivation. Without parental support, students will not succeed in learning and will not gain the additional social benefits of parental interaction.

Suzuki Triangle

Suzuki focuses on a triangle of parents, a child, and a teacher. If one element is missing, the education will not be successful. For this reason, parents are expected to attend all lessons. We also encourage good communication between students, parents, and teachers at all times. If parents wait to ask a question until the next lesson, it may be too late. We ask parents to call or e-mail their questions, concerns or comments at any time. Good communication also helps teachers understand how students progress at home.

Early Beginnings

The Suzuki violin/viola/cello program starts at an early age. Suzuki asked all parents to play recordings repeatedly to help memorize pieces before students began lessons. Although the program can begin at an early age, Suzuki teaching is not just for young children.

Parental Involvement

Suzuki parents are actively involved in the learning process. Parents attend lessons, take notes and help students practice at home. Teachers will explain how students need to practice and give practice tips. Most parents who are in the Suzuki program do not know how to read music or how to play a musical instrument. Parents do not need to be musicians to be successful Suzuki parents. Because the parent is learning the student will feel more like a part of a learning team and parents and children will have the fun of learning to play together. In addition, teachers will help parents address issues that might arise at home when it comes to practice and playing.

Listening and Observing

Students and parents are encouraged to observe other students' lesson, with the permission of the instructor.

Students need to listen to recordings as much as they can. Teachers require students to have good listening skills before they start learning note reading. This will make the transition to note reading more fluid.