



# SUZUKI FLYER

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Welcome back to another great year of violin/viola learning and fun! Hopefully everyone has had some time to rest over the summer and is ready to continue on the journey of learning to play beautiful music. Our first lesson of the school year is a Group Lesson on September 11, 2009. We will meet at Hidenwood Presbyterian Church Music Room. See the Group Lesson times below for your scheduled time.

The Suzuki schedule of lessons/performance/events for 2009 –2010 has been mailed out with this newsletter. It is also available on our website at [www.elliottfamilyquartet.com](http://www.elliottfamilyquartet.com)

Please be sure to keep your Suzuki calendars posted in a central location so that you can follow the dates for lessons/groups/recital etc. It is no fun to be in the wrong place when the calendar spells out where you should go. Also, bring conflicts to my attention ASAP.

Enclosed please find the following:

1. **A registration form** to update your information such as address or phone numbers if it has changed.
2. **September invoice** due at your first lesson in September. The annual registration fee is also included in each invoice. The \$30 fee is applied to your membership with the Suzuki Association of Americas.
3. **Two 2009-2010 Suzuki Violin Calendars.** Outlines all lessons, group lessons, recitals, workshops, and other activities. One paper and one magnet calendar for your refrigerator.
4. **Assigned lesson day & times are listed on each invoice.**

## Studio Activities

### Lessons:

Attendance and participation are very important factors to the progress of students. Students are expected to be present at their scheduled lessons except in cases such as illness or other extenuating circumstances. Lessons are scheduled back to back, so **please be prompt**. For the consideration of other students, late students may receive a shorter lesson in order to keep other students on their

schedule. Refunds are only given for excused absences and will not be given for lessons casually missed.

If I need to cancel a lesson because of a conflict with a performance, I will try to offer a make up date. The make up lesson will not be required. If a student can not make up the lesson, or I can not offer a make up lesson, a refund in the form of a credit towards the next month's tuition will be given.

### Student Expectations:

All students are expected to practice a MINIMUM of 5 days each week. Practice should include; 1 book of review, work on the current piece, and scales and etude/music reading if assigned. Students should bring the following supplies to each lesson:

1. A Pencil
2. A Composition book for teacher to write in assignments.
3. Their violin and bow!
4. Their music
5. A good attitude!

The following reading/etude books are recommended:

Pretwinkle & early book 1 students  
[I Can Read Music](#) by Joanne Martin.

Mid book 1 & 2 students  
[Essential Elements 2000](#).

Book 3 & 4 students  
[Wohlfahrt Op. 38](#)

Book 4 & up students  
[Wohlfahrt Op. 45](#)  
[Kreutzer Etude](#) book (Galamian edition).

If students have been already using a different book than what is listed, it is not necessary to purchase the above books. We will continue to use what they have.

### Group Lessons & Group Assignments:

Group lessons help reinforce individual lessons and provide valuable opportunities for children to observe and learn from other children at slightly different skill levels. Group lessons allow students to work alongside others who share common repertory, musical skills, and aspirations. The fees for group lessons are included in your tuition.

I considered moving group lessons to Saturdays instead of Fridays due to concerns by some parents about traffic on Fridays. However, surveying other parents revealed that most parents prefer Fridays due to Saturday being reserved for sports, other activities, or family time.

I have been experimenting with dividing the groups into different levels over the past years. This year I hope to work a lot more on ensemble and music reading as well as review Suzuki repertoire.

Students are assigned into 4 groups. Check for assigned groups below. As the year progresses, students may be moved to a different group as needed.

### **Group Class Assignments:**

#### **Allegro Group Class 4:00pm – 5:00pm**

Debra Saxton	Zipporah Saxton
Tyler Pope	Mila Hill
Kearston Gonzales	Jared Graziani
Nicole Graziani	Johnny Graziani

**Goals:** This class will review early book 1 thru early book 2 pieces. The class will also practice music reading skills using a combination of “I Can Read Music” and “Essential Elements 2000 Book 1”. Early Book 1 students should already have “I Can Read Music” and mid book 1 to early book 2 should have “Essential Elements 2000”. This class will occasionally merge other groups to work on ensemble music.

#### **Vivace Group Class 5:00pm – 6:00pm**

David Saxton	David Whitlock
Benjamin McGee	Dana Carroll

**Goals:** This class will review late book 2 thru book 3 pieces. The class will practice music reading skills using Essential Elements 2000 Book 1. This class will occasionally merge with other groups to work on ensemble music.

#### **Presto Group Class 6:00pm -7:00pm**

Gabriella Graziani	Promise Paulden
Gabriella Sandoval	Marshall Padilla
Olivia Nail (Violin)	Lauren McGee
Emily Walkenhorst	Justine Elliott
Debra Caldwell	Brendon Elliott
Sterling Elliott	

**Goals:** This class will review any music from books 4 and up. The class will practice ensemble skills using a group music booklet to be given to students. This class will occasionally merge with other groups to work on ensemble music.

#### **Alto Group Class 7:-00pm -7:45pm**

Olivia Nail	Mr. Paulden
Nathan Walkenhorst	Mrs. Walkenhorst

**Goals:** This class will review Suzuki viola pieces. The class will practice ensemble skills using a group music booklet to be given to students. This class will occasionally merge with other groups to work on ensemble music.

Parents who play are free to join in the group that they are the most comfortable.

Oftentimes group lessons will only be intended for students preparing for a special group performance such as the performance at the Ferguson Center for the Arts. I expect that group lessons in **January – March** will be for the **Ferguson Ensemble only**. Non participating students will receive a credit on their invoice.

### **Recitals:**

Recitals help students gain confidence performing as soloists. Recitals are an important part of the learning process, as they give the student further incentive to study by making him/her set and attain a goal within a certain timeframe. All students are expected to participate in the recitals. Students who participate in the recitals make more progress than those who do not. Recital fees are added to the tuition. If a student has an extenuating circumstance that prevents them from participating in the recital, a credit will be issued to their invoice for that month.

### **Ferguson Center for the Arts Performance**

Last year's Ferguson concert was simply outstanding! A lot of work and commitment went into preparing for the performance, but it was definitely worth it! This year we will again be performing at the Ferguson Center on March 26, 2010. Mr. Vahn Armstrong will be the featured soloist performing the Bartok Violin Concerto, so we will be receiving complimentary tickets to the performance! I will be handing out music folders very soon.

There will be special rehearsals scheduled to help us prepare for this performance. Most of the rehearsals will begin in January 2010. It is important that all participating students attend the rehearsals for this event. A copy of the rehearsal schedule will be posted on the website. A hardcopy of the schedule will also be provided to students.



SmartMusic is award-winning learning software with the power to transform music learning. Students of all ages and skill levels can play with professional accompaniments, making practice both rewarding and fun. An affordable subscription (\$30/year) to SmartMusic gives students the opportunity to practice all of the Suzuki books, and more with accompaniments!

Some of the benefits of using SmartMusic are:

- Learn how your part fits with the rest of your musical group or the piano accompaniment.
- Play solos with Intelligent Accompaniment® and SmartMusic will follow your tempo changes
- Move at your own pace. You control the tempo and key.
- Record and play back your practice sessions.

SmartMusic encourages students to practice and perfect musical skills in a fun, engaging environment. With thousands of accompaniments, SmartMusic is the future of music learning.

Many students have already been enjoying the benefits of using Smart Music in their daily practice. I have been so impressed with this program that I have also begun using it in the private lessons. Students are already used to polishing pieces to performance level to earn a star. Since SmartMusic is such a good tool, I have decided to have each student perform each piece with SmartMusic in order to earn their star on each piece. This helps to ensure that students are able to play their piece with piano accompaniment and that they can keep a steady tempo.

Therefore, I highly encourage parents to subscribe to the program at [www.smartmusic.com](http://www.smartmusic.com) so that students can begin using the program right away. That way students are already prepared and know what to expect in their lessons. If parents cannot acquire this program, the next best thing would be for students to practice their pieces with their CD.

## Workshop Scholarship Fund



The annual Suzuki Workshop sponsored by STAHR, will be held on March 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> 2010 at Hidenwood Presbyterian Church in Newport News again this year. .

We are in our 3<sup>rd</sup> year of fund raising for the Workshop scholarship fund. The scholarship money helps to send students to the workshop that may not be able to attend to due financial reasons.

This year Emily's mom, Darlene Walkenhorst, had an ingenious idea to help raise more money for the workshop; Parents who have gently used instruments and don't mind donating them can simply donate the instruments to the scholarship fund. Families who would like to use the instrument donate \$40/year to use the instrument. All of the money goes directly to the scholarship fund! I love this idea, and hope to send at least 2 students to the workshop with the funds raised this year!

I will still continue to take monthly donations from families who wish to round up their tuition and donate the extra to the fund. There will be a section on each invoice that indicates how parents may donate to this fund.

## Understanding the Suzuki Parent's Role



### The Parent as an Assistant to the Teacher

*The Suzuki parent's role as assistant begins at the first lesson. The parent assists the child and the teacher by taking very clear precise notes so that s/he can be an effective teacher at the home*

*practice. Whatever information the teacher gives in the way of assignments and recommendations should be carefully noted by the parent on either a practice sheet or in a notebook.*

### The parent as home teacher must keep the practice time sacred.

*What are the duties of the Suzuki parent as home teacher? The most important task for the parent is to establish a daily practice time and stick with it so that it becomes a habit for both parent and child. My experience has been that the greatest success occurs when practice is the same time every day. This is important for a couple of reasons. Having the same time of day for practice creates a habit for sure, but it also requires that we not let other things intrude on that time or else we will not be practicing at the same time every day. If the parent does not schedule anything else at that time of day including dental and medical appointments and does not let the child participate in other activities or play with friends until the practice is completed, talent will have a real chance to develop. Moving the practice time around tells the child that practice is not sacred but just something else we do when we can find the time. That is not the attitude you want your child to have about his Suzuki study so you must not have that attitude either.*

### The parent as home teacher must immerse the child in music.

*The second most important job of the teacher parent is to immerse the child in the music s/he is learning. You cannot play the recordings of the music that your child is learning too much. He cannot know the music too well. We are teaching the children to memorize their music by being completely surrounded by the sounds. The Suzuki child does not know how he knows it, but it is inside of his head, and thus he is able to play it. When a child has been sufficiently immersed in his music he is confident about being able to play. Everything including his behavior is improved. Much of the resistance we see in students is caused by the fact that they do not have the music they are expected to play inside of their heads. Many try to think their way through pieces and become anxious and nervous. When the child doesn't know his music sufficiently to play without forgetting, it not only makes the child nervous, but the parents become anxious and short-tempered as well. Sometimes I wonder if we really believe that all children have talent as Suzuki said. If we believed that our children could really play at the advanced level that Suzuki promised, surely we would do those things that he said were required for the child to reach the highest level. Daily practicing and listening must be done for your child to become a talented musician.*

**As the home teacher the parent must understand proper technique for playing the instrument.**

*Beyond making sure that there is daily practice and immersion listening, the Suzuki parent must understand the technique of playing the instrument as demonstrated by the teacher. The parent attends the lessons not just to take notes, but also to learn how to be the guiding hands for the child away from the lesson. I think that the only really difficult part of playing an instrument is the learning of the proper technique. Developing a good technique takes time, patience, and repeated demonstration by someone who understands the importance of learning the proper way to play. All parents who are really interested in helping their children learn must comprehend proper technique. Even if a parent cannot play the advanced literature, parents can be taught the early techniques so that they can supervise their child's practice on a daily basis. By teaching parents Twinkles in their parent education course and continuing to explain concepts to the parent in the lesson, parents can become experts in the area of instrument technique and tone production. Without the parents daily attention to proper tone and technique the child will not excel.*

**As the child's home teacher the parent must be able to read music.**

*In order to help the child with music he cannot decipher either from listening or reading (which comes later on) the parent must be able to read music herself. Some of the skills of music reading can be taught in an parent education course, and I have found that parents pick up the rest from attendance at weekly lessons and the daily work they do with their child.*

**Finally, the Suzuki parent must nurture the child on a daily basis.**

*It is very important when trying to teach your child that you nurture and support your child's efforts. From what I have seen and heard it is the child/parent relationship that requires the most thought and patience. Suzuki parents often have to change their parenting style in order for their relationship with their child to work. Neither the authoritarian nor the permissive parenting style will work over the long haul. Parents have to stay in a calm, peaceful state of mind and not push and bully the child during practice. The parent must provide the best possible environment and then let the child learn at his own pace.*

*-by Jeanne Luedke*



This article was printed from the Spring American Suzuki Journal. The \$30 membership fee (included in September's tuition) will sign each family up for the Suzuki Association of America. Members receive this informative Journal each quarter.