



In This Issue

- 1 What is a Suzuki Graduation Recital?
- 2 The Prepared Practice Environment
- 4 President's Message
- 4 Calendar

What is a Suzuki Graduation Recital?

Suzuki Graduation recitals have been going on in San Diego for many years thanks to the efforts of a group of very dedicated instructors. However, how many of us are really aware of the existence of these recitals, what it takes to put one on and what takes place at the performance? Keep reading and you will soon have a clear understanding of the process.

First, what is a Graduation Recital? The Suzuki Graduation Recital is a semi-annual event that recognizes students who have completed a particular level of the Suzuki repertoire. Students perform a chosen selection in front of an audience (usually their families, teachers and peers), with or without accompaniment. At the end of the recital, participants are presented with an award commemorating the completion of their level(s). Graduation from a specific level requires graduation from all previous levels, though some students may graduate from multiple levels simultaneously and play several pieces.

Participation in Graduation Recitals is not mandatory; however, it affords students an opportunity to have their accomplishments recognized, and provides a sense of completion before moving on to the next level of their musical education. San Diego region Graduation Recitals usually take place in January and June.

Before participating in a Graduation Recital, it is imperative for teachers to be certain that students are sufficiently prepared. When a teacher is confident that a student can produce a polished performance of the required selection for a given level, a recording of the student's performance is submitted to the Graduation Committee. The Committee, led by Susanna Han, reviews and critiques students' performances, and sends written reports back to the students. Participants and their teachers must also be current SMAC-SDB members in order

to participate.

What does it take to put on a Graduation Recital? In short, a lot of hard work, dedication, and support. For the past several years, the SMAC San Diego Branch has benefitted from the organizational talents of Susanna Han, who has been the mastermind behind the recitals. Susanna's efforts in securing a venue, informing teachers of the recitals, and preparing her own students to participate have resulted in countless successful recitals. One cannot forget to thank the owners of venues such as the Hammond Ashley Violin Shop and the San Diego Women's Club, which have provided SMAC-SDB with the use of their facilities. And, of course, there could be no Graduation Recital at all without the extraordinary efforts of our teachers, parents, and students, who work tirelessly to ensure that students receive the support and training required in order to advance in their musical studies.



The Rosewood Trio: Gabriel Jasmin, cello student of Glen Campbell; Morgan Mastrovich, violin student of Pama Lynn Broeckel; and David Morales Boroff, piano student of Doris Koppelman at the SAA Conference in Minneapolis. See complete story in the next Newsletter. Photo by Jeff Strout

Teacher's Column

The Prepared Practice Environment

By Danielle Gomez

Dr. Maria Montessori (founder of the Montessori Method) frequently brings up the idea of the "prepared environment" in her work. She emphasizes that the ability of a child to successfully learn a concept is largely dependent on the teacher's preparation of the surrounding environment. Therefore, in a Montessori classroom, all objects are at the child's height and easily accessible. The materials presented to the child are all things that he has been shown how to use and will direct his learning process.

Dr. Shin'ichi Suzuki drew similar conclusions in his own observations. As he watched parents teach their children how to speak, he noted the environment of continuous positive reinforcement. He saw that children have an affinity for repetition and a desire for familiarity. Thus, he created a recording of the songs they were to learn. Aside from helping them memorize their pieces, the recording of the songs gives children a sense of owning the repertoire; "Hey, that's my song" you will hear them say. When they own the repertoire, it is familiar and comfortable.

Both of these approaches to education should be kept in mind by the parents of young musicians. The "prepared practice environment" should have two aspects to it: emotional support and physical surroundings. Emotional support should always include the positive reinforcement. Less obviously, however, is how the parent enters the practice environment. If the child is expected to be calm and attentive, then it is the parent's job to start the practice session in a calm and attentive manner.

Equally important are the physical surroundings. In today's houses, it is not always practical to have an entire room

devoted solely to the study of music; nor is this necessary for a smooth practice session. Always practicing in the same room at the same time of day gives children a sense of solidity. Practicing their instrument goes from a flighty activity that may or may not happen to something that will always occur in a set time and location.

While there does not have to be a music room, it is important that children feel like their parents support their musical endeavors. One really easy way to do this is to play classical music in the house other than their Suzuki CD. Not only does this increase the student's familiarity to more repertoire but it also sends a subtle message that they are learning how to play music that their parents like listening to outside of the practice sessions. This means that when the parent listens to the student play, they are listening out of enjoyment rather than something they have to endure.

Suzuki frequently made the connection that learning to play music should be like learning how to speak. A child learns how to speak not because their parents tell them this is something they need to do. They learn to speak because they want to be a part of the environment around them. A musical education should be the same. The desire to learn an instrument does not come from practice sessions; it comes from wanting to be a part of a greater environment.



Back row: Krista S., Front Row: Elizabeth C., Isabella V., and Josheiry T.

Southbay Play-a-thon

2010 was the first year in which Southbay Strings Suzuki Violin Students participated in a Play-a-thon. The SMAC-SD board would like to thank Krista, Elizabeth, Isabella, Josheiry, and Kristoffer (not pictured), for their fundraising efforts and many hours of practice to make the Play-a-thon a success.

Suzuki Music Association of California
San Diego Branch

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

Criteria: Current member of SMAC-SDB (9/1/09-8/31/10)
\$100 maximum per family/teacher per year
Teacher and student scholarships available
Application MUST be postmarked by June 30, 2010
Limited number of scholarships available

Suggested use of monies:

Suzuki Workshops
Strings by the Sea
Teacher Training and Workshops
Concert Tickets
(Cannot be used for supplies, piano tuning or private lessons)

Student's Name _____

Address _____

Telephone Number _____

Parent's Name _____

Email (required) _____

Instrument _____ Teacher's Name _____

Application for: Teacher _____ Student _____

Funds requested to be used for? _____

***This form must be fully and legibly completed to be considered for a scholarship.**

Send to: Stephen Luchs
8472 Via Sonoma #25
La Jolla, CA 92037

President's Message

The 2009-2010 year, my first as your president, is quickly coming to a close.

I would like to start off by recognizing all of the members of SMAC-SDB for their hard work, contributions and dedication in keeping this organization alive. Thanks to everyone who either became new members or renewed their memberships; those who participated in this year's Play-a-thon; and everyone who gives of their time in support of our branch. In hard times like these, it is very refreshing to know that people are still reaching out to the arts and contributing to the enrichment of lives of students through music.

On the subject of further enrichment, several Suzuki institutes,

music camps, and smaller workshops will be taking place this summer. We hope to see all of you there, taking advantage of the extra learning possibilities and motivational experiences that these events can provide to students,



Eliana G. Newall, President

parents, and teachers alike. It has been my observation that students who take the opportunity to attend workshops or institutes come back inspired and driven to move ahead. These events also serve to reinforce what students have already learned. Please check our website periodically for postings of institutes and summer camps in our area.

I would also like to congratulate all of the participants of the January 2010 Graduation Recital and to wish the best to all who will be performing at the next Graduation Recital, which will be held on Saturday, June 12 at 2:00 PM at the Hammond Ashley Violin Shop.

I hope you all will continue your support of SMAC-SDB by renewing your membership for 2010-2011.

Have a safe, fun and musical summer.

Calendar

- **Graduation Recital**
Hammond Ashley Violin Shop
Saturday, June 12 at 2:00 PM
Hammond Ashley Violin Shop
6255 Ferris Square
Suite E
San Diego, CA 92121
- **Strings by the Sea**
San Diego Music Camp
Point Loma campus
August 2-6, 2010
www.stringsbythesea.org
Go to web site for application and more information

Suzuki Music Association of California—San Diego Branch Newsletter

If you have articles or photos for the newsletter, please send them to Connie Almond:
CAlmond886@aol.com
619-463-1459
619-922-0403 (mobile)

Doris Koppelman, Education Editor
DKoppel88@aol.com
619-465-5669

