

May 2021

Dear Prospective Suzuki Parents,

Thank you for your interest in the Western Reserve Suzuki School (WRSS). Enclosed is an introduction packet explaining this unique approach to teaching instrumental music. Please take time to read it carefully.

You will find that the Suzuki approach is different from other traditional approaches, specifically in its philosophy, style of learning and parental/family involvement. This style of learning makes it possible for very young children to achieve high levels of success. The Suzuki approach requires a major commitment, but the rewards for both you and your child will be great and will last a lifetime.

At the present time we offer private lesson instruction in violin, viola and cello, in addition to our twice a month group classes which include: play-ins, group classes, chamber ensemble/reading orchestra, informal and formal recitals and community performances. Group classes take place twice a month at Pilgrim Church 130 Broad Blvd in Cuyahoga Falls. Private lessons take place in various locations – including Hudson, Cuyahoga Falls and West Akron. New parents will work with child's teacher to develop skills necessary to become an effective home teacher/practice partner.

WHAT IS NEXT?

After you have read the attached information, the next step is to contact Marlene Moses mmosesviolin@gmail.com or 330-256-1699 in order to schedule one to two private lesson observations. The observations allow you and your child to see our philosophy in action and also allows WRSS faculty to meet you and your child and determine lesson readiness. If you are unsure which instrument is right for your child, it is best to observe multiple lessons of different instruments.

Once the observations are complete, you will be put in touch with an instructor who has openings, and you can discuss lesson time availability at that point. The Registration materials may then be submitted once a lesson time is agreed upon by your family and prospective teacher. We see each student for one private lesson per week. Saturday classes meet about twice a month and serve to motivate and reinforce what is going on in the private lessons. Saturday classes also serve as an important social connection between students and families. The other thing to factor in is the need to set aside 20-30 minutes each day (more as the student progresses) for practice. Practice entails essentially “recreating” the lesson, with the parent as home teacher. Both lesson time and practice time need to be scheduled at a time that is optimal for your child. Late in the evening is usually not a good time to initiate practice or have a lesson.

SUZUKI LISTENING

If you have decided that our Suzuki program is a good fit for your family, you will want to purchase the Suzuki volume 1 Book and CD and start listening right away – even before you have a set lesson time. The recordings can also be accessed via streaming services such as Spotify. The process of observing and then finding a lesson time can take weeks, depending upon instructor availability. The more flexible your schedule, the more likely it is that we will find a lesson time for you and your child.

The Suzuki materials may be purchased from SHAR Music by calling 1-800-248-SHAR. You will need to purchase a Suzuki Volume 1 CD for listening, a Suzuki Volume I book, and Dr. Suzuki's book Nurtured By Love. Local Music Stores may carry the materials as well, though you should call and find out for sure. Additionally, new parents will be encouraged to purchase Time to Practice by Carrie Reuning Hummel.

Please feel free to contact one of the teachers with any comments or questions. We look forward to working and playing with you and your children.

Most Sincerely,

Marlene Moses
330-256-1699
mmosesviolin@gmail.com

The Western Reserve Suzuki School

SUZUKI PHILOSOPHY

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SUZUKI APPROACH

The Suzuki 'Method' is actually a philosophy of studying music originating in Japan by Dr. Shinichi Suzuki. Originally developed for violin study, the Suzuki Approach has since been adapted for use in the study of various instruments as a natural way of learning music. It is often called the “mother-tongue” approach because the children learn music in the same way they learn to speak their native language. Children learn an entire language at a very young age because it is a part of their environment. Every child who is immersed in his/her native tongue will learn to speak with just that inflection. The same is true in music. This means that everyone can develop superior sensitivity and a true understanding of music if they are immersed in an environment of high quality music. Working together, the parent, child and teacher can create an environment where every child can develop ability and a beautiful heart.

THE SUZUKI ENVIRONMENT

Children learning to speak, hear and understand much of their language before actually learning to speak. Children learn to speak because they are consistently being talked to. They are encouraged and expected to speak. When studying instrument by way of the Suzuki Approach, children must first be totally acquainted with the literature they will be studying, just as they are acquainted with their native language. By listening and watching, children learn very naturally. The teacher only needs to show them how to bring out the “musical language” that they already know. All children develop at their own pace

A POSITIVE-ONE STEP AT A TIME APPROACH

When children learn to speak we don't immediately expect them to speak perfectly. We do, however, expect them to eventually be able to express themselves fluently. In the process, we encourage the child by repeating the words over and over. For example, how many times did you say “mama” to your small child? When “mama” was attempted, like most parents, I'm sure, you responded with “Yes!!”, and then repeated it again and again.

In the Suzuki Approach, we learn one step at a time, or perhaps one finger, one rhythm pattern, one technique. We learn by repetition and positive reinforcement. Dr. Suzuki says, “Don't push, don't scold, and don't forget to praise.” When one step is mastered, we add the next step. In this way, everything is learned completely and thoroughly. Continual work on review pieces allows a child to experience mastery while continuing to build upon an increasing foundation of skills necessary for upcoming repertoire.

THE ROLE OF THE SUZUKI PARENT

The Suzuki Approach is most different from other types of instruction in that the involvement of the parent(s) is essential. The parent brings not only the instrument and music, but also a dedicated music notebook to take detailed notes. The teacher will help the parent devise strategies for creating a musical environment at home, including daily listening to the Suzuki music. During the lesson, the teacher introduces various techniques of the piece, previewing any tricky places or new ideas. By being actively involved in the lesson, a parent obtains the necessary skills to be an effective 'home teacher' – checking for correct posture, bow hold, fingering etc. If the proper environment has been created by consistent listening to the Suzuki music, a child will be able to play each new piece by ear, which allows the teacher to work on important foundation skills of correct and balanced violin posture, bow hold etc.

The child's teacher will give parent and child a list of things to practice and focus on for the week. While the parent is responsible for establishing daily home practice routine, it is possible to give the child some say in certain aspects of practice such as the order of items on the practice list. Choosing a practice time that is optimal for the child is very important. Tired kids (and parents) don't tend to have the most productive practice sessions! Practice sessions should definitely be limited to the child's attention span (for pre-schoolers, sometimes 5-10 minutes), but must be regularly scheduled every day. The child's teacher will be able to help parents structure the practice and offer tips and tricks to incorporate simple 'games' into the practice for the young beginners.

READING

In the same way that children learn to speak first, then read, the Suzuki Approach teaches children to play their instrument before they read music. Reading is a necessary, but separate skill and really has nothing to do with a child's ability to play, just as reading books has nothing to do with one's ability to speak.

When children are ready to begin reading in school, they are usually ready to begin reading music as well. For older beginners (7, 8 or 9 years old) reading can begin almost simultaneously with their study of the Suzuki literature. However, they are learning two separate skills. It takes much practice and time before a person is reading at the same level as their speech and this is also true of music.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Typically, new Suzuki students start lessons first on a box violin or cello (provided by the teacher), not the actual instrument. This gives the child time to learn how to hold the instrument without worry of it dropping. It also allows the child to focus on his/her body rather than the instrument itself. When the child is ready, a transition to the real instrument can be made. When that time comes, you will need to purchase or rent a quality instrument after consulting with your teacher. String students must have an instrument that is the right size, and so it must be measured by the WRSS teacher, not the shop owner or parent. Consult with your teacher before purchasing any instrument. (See the resource section in order to purchase CDs, music and instruments). You will also be required to make an initial purchase of the REVISED Suzuki Volume 1 Book and CD, and Nurtured by Love by Dr. Suzuki. Two more books, Time to Practice by Carrie Reuning Hummel and To Learn With Love by William and Constance Starr are recommended but not required.

*A note about EBay and Amazon (and other non-music internet sites) - while it is not impossible to find a decent instrument over the internet, in most cases you are not dealing with a qualified dealer or string expert and thus cannot be certain of the quality of the instrument. Any reputable dealer or seller should allow a buyer to try the instrument before buying. Dealing with a local shop allows you to trade in when a new size is needed, fix damages and repair bows. You cannot get that service online.

THE WESTERN RESERVE SUZUKI SCHOOL

PROGRAM SPECIFICS

INSTRUCTION - Our Suzuki program includes weekly private lessons of 30, 45 or 60 minutes in length depending upon the age, attention span and level of the child. In addition to the private lesson, families may elect to participate in twice a month Saturday morning group classes which serve to reinforce concepts introduced at lessons, allowing for student to participate with their peers in group classes and chamber orchestra. Our youngest students receive music reading/theory instruction. As well, our Saturday group classes provide opportunities for students to perform their polished piece for their peers. This valuable informal performance opportunity gives students a level of comfort when it comes to presenting a piece on our formal recital.

OBSERVATION - You will be required to observe one to two private lesson observations and, if available, a Saturday group class observation.

PERFORMANCES – WRSS has two formal recitals scheduled during the year. We also provide various informal and community opportunities for our students. The more involved a family is in the various performance and concert opportunities, the more progress is made by the student. Attendance at these performances is recommended, but not mandatory.

REGISTRATION OPTIONS

Option A (Basic Registration) \$150 per year*

includes two Formal Recitals and all Recital Rehearsals with our wonderful WRSS Collaborative Pianist. Tentative Recital dates are Nov 20, 2021 and April 30, 2022. Various recital rehearsal options will be offered in the weeks before the recitals.

Option B (Full Registration) \$395 per year*

Includes everything in Option A plus twice a month Saturday morning group classes and informal solo performance opportunities throughout the year, plus 2-3 community concerts and rehearsals at events such as National Anthem performances, Tree Festival performance, Fox 8 Morning show performance and various performances throughout the community including retirement communities. Saturday morning group classes take place from 9-10:30 am roughly two times each month. The group classes include Suzuki repertoire that is used to increase competence and skill and the chamber classes provide an opportunity to learn new music in a chamber setting. Students are grouped into classes according to their skill levels and ages. Saturday classes provide an opportunity for students to make new friends and learn from peers.

***NOTE: Registration payment can be made by check or, if preferred, by credit card. There is a 3% fee added to credit card payments in order to cover the cost of this option. See link below to register. Those paying by check will also register online and will then have 2 weeks to submit payment by check to WRSS 4195 Leewood Rd Stow, OH 44224**

<https://www.westernreservesuzukischool.org/register>

WRSS Registration fee/form is due no later than June 30. This guarantees a spot for your child and covers fees for all recitals, Saturday classes and performances. Private lesson tuition will be billed separately by your teacher either monthly or quarterly. Lessons will be suspended if payment or arrangement for payment is not made by deadline.

Private Lesson Tuition fees are as follows

30 minute lesson: \$33 per lesson

45 minute lesson: \$50 per lesson

60 minute lesson: \$66 per lesson

Studio Policy - Your teacher will have specific studio policies regarding missed lessons and other lesson details. Lesson tuition scholarship is available for eligible Option B families who have been in the program for one year or more.

THE WESTERN RESERVE SUZUKI SCHOOL

CURRENT STUDENT REGISTRATION FORM

Student's Name _____ Instrument _____ Age _____

Parent's Names _____

Home Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Cell phone _____

E-Mail address _____

REGISTRATION LEVELS

OPTION A: RECITAL ONLY OPTION \$150 per year

Includes two Formal Recitals and all Recital Rehearsals with our wonderful WRSS Collaborative Pianist. Tentative Recital dates are Nov 20, 2021 and April 30, 2022. Various recital rehearsal options will be offered in the weeks before the recitals

OPTION B: FULL REGISTRATION \$395

Includes everything in Option A plus twice a month Saturday morning group classes and informal solo performance opportunities throughout the year, plus 2-3 community concerts and rehearsals at events such as National Anthem performances, Tree Festival performance, Fox 8 Morning show performance and various performances throughout the community including retirement communities. Saturday morning group classes take place from 9-10:30 am roughly two times each month. The group classes include Suzuki repertoire that is used to increase competence and skill and the chamber classes provide an opportunity to learn new music in a chamber setting. Students are grouped into classes according to their skill levels and ages. Saturday classes provide an opportunity for students to make new friends and learn from peers.

Registration payment can be made by check or, if preferred, by credit card. There is a 3% fee added to credit card payments in order to cover the cost of this option. See link below to register. Those paying by check will also register online and will then have 2 weeks to submit payment by check to WRSS 4195 Leewood Rd Stow, OH 44224

<https://www.westernreservesuzukischool.org/register>

CURRENT STUDENTS

Deadline to Register is June 30

AFTER June 30, Fee goes up to \$175 and \$425