

# The Write Note

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1

FEBRUARY 03, 1997

## Recital Week

Preparations are underway for recital week. In spite of missed lessons that are weather related, pieces have been chosen and teachers are helping students polish their piece.

**Sign up sheets for day and time slots will go up on February 10 - two weeks prior to our Recital Week.**

**The program time is 4:30 - 5:30 p.m. each day.**

Parents, please sign up as a hostess to help with refreshments. This is a good time to get to know other parents and students. Children choose role models when they hear others play. This is an opportunity for you and your child to enjoy listening to other students.

Remember, there are no scheduled lessons or group lessons that week. To play on a recital is your lesson.

## From The President's Desk

HAPPY 1997 and welcome to the 2nd semester of Suzuki musical education for this school year. It may be cold outside, but at least your home is filled with the beautiful sounds of your children practicing - or was that the tape you were listening to? I know that sometimes it's hard to tell the difference, especially if your children are working hard on their piece for Recital Week which is scheduled for Feb. 24 - Feb. 28.

Briefly looking back at 1996 - The housing Authority of Elgin thanks all the ESTE families who donated gifts to their children for Christmas. Our own ESTE Christmas Party was delightful - from the magical Santa and terrific holiday music played by the basses, cellos, flutes and violins (listed alphabetically F.Y.I.) to the wonderful array of holiday treats. And the Innisbrook Gift Wrap Sale was a huge success with a profit of \$1187.11. Congratulations to the winners of the sales contest: JaeAnn Thietji, Parkson Lin and Justine Yoder who received their prize \$\$\$ at the Mini-Institute play-in, and thanks to the 30 students who took part in this fundraiser. Imagine the profits if every family would participate!!!

Looking ahead to 1997 - Special thanks to Jeff Goodlove for his efforts in keeping us all informed with the "Notes And Calendar" which he has been placing in the Family Files. Please check this list for upcoming perfor-

mance dates and important information. Of course you have already marked your 1997 calendar for the spring Program on Friday, May 16th at ECC. The Suzuki Plus Board is working hard on this endeavor and will relay the specific information to you as soon as possible.

We need a Chairperson for the Spring Flower Sale. We are hoping to use many of these flowers in decorating for the Spring Program so this is an issue which needs to be resolved quickly. Please get involved by volunteering your time - it won't take much and think of the fun you will have!!! Call me at 428-0719 if you are interested.

Remember J.S.Bach's 312th birthday on March 21st. We will celebrate this with our second annual Bach's Lunch, which was a unique and successful fundraiser last year.

So take a break from your normal everyday, stressful life and enjoy reading this newsletter. We publish this to keep all of us informed and involved in something that we all share - the musical education of our children. Stay warm and keep smiling.

Happily Yours,

Betty Biasotti, President

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# Keeping Expectations High

By Virginia Dixon

When I first started teaching privately in New York, Joe was a gawky middle school student. Perhaps because he did not fit in elsewhere, he responded to my individual attention, learned a solo with great energy and enthusiasm, won a small scholarship contest, and began working very hard for me. I anticipated good things from Joe as he entered high school. But not much happened. He continued lessons with me, but he practiced very little and seemed to be musically under a cloud. You see, Joe was an ace student, a top debater, a swell guy, and an enthusiastic music lover, but Joe's orchestra director thought that Joe had no musical talent, and Joe sensed this. I discovered it for myself when I called to consult with her about his case of tendinitis that she believed he did not have. To her it was a student's excuse for laziness.

As he reaped many of the rewards of being an otherwise successful high school student and gained early acceptance into one of the East coast's finest journalism programs, he seemed to shed the stigma that his orchestra director had put upon him. He proceeded to memorize an impressive-sounding piece, perform it in another competition, and won himself another music scholarship, this time to college. I was proud! In spite of all of the discouragement from his director maybe he would, after all of this, end up playing as an amateur or buying concert tickets or becoming an orchestra board member for much of the rest of his life.

Dave Cobb was my first private teacher, and I was his first student. He had once been a fine trombonist, but then was stricken with polio and confined to an iron lung machine. He is one of the most positive people I ever met. At age 25 he worked his way out of the iron lung machine, and though he was too severely injured to continue as a trombonist, he took up the bass. When I first met him 15 years later, he was the principal bassist of two metropolitan symphonies. When he discovered the delights of teaching, he sold his insurance business and quickly acquired 40 private bass students. We all loved him. I remember him once talking

about the neighbor kid who was supposed to have no talent. Dave enthusiastically gave him lessons. "But it's so good for him", he said with his broad grin. Many years have passed, and he has been partly responsible for two of our country's most highly-placed principal bassists: Ed Barker of the Boston Symphony, and his own son, Tim, of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra.

Occasionally, I have the opportunity to work with a student with disability. I love the challenge to my creativity to see if I can work around the handicap or if I can become a part of the therapy. The components of playing must be broken down into ever more basic parts. When accomplishment begins, the rewards also start pouring in for me as well as the student. Success could not be sweeter, even though we may be the only two people in the whole world who know what has been accomplished.

All of the above situations, both successful and unsuccessful, hinge on the expectations of teachers. I think we owe it to ourselves, our students, and our profession to ask ourselves what our personal motivation is when we teach. Do we have a hidden agenda, and what is it? Were we somehow disappointed in our own lack of successes, and do we use the role of teacher to fulfill vicariously the things that we did not accomplish ourselves? In doing so do we only encourage the very talented? Or do we truly love our art and wish to share it and to see its continuance, despite our own needs?

When we are dismayed by the progress of a student, I think that we owe it to that student, to ourselves, and to the music world, to ask if our own lack of expectation could be contributing negatively to the situation. Students are so eager to please, and it may be a little rejection or even indifference that is causing problems. If we think only the best of our students, then they will be more able to do their very finest for us.

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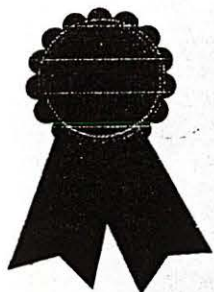
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*Joanna Mellen was a member of the Illinois All-State District Orchestra this fall, and was also selected for the State Orchestra. She will participate in the state activities in Peoria January 30 - February 1, 1997. Competition among violinists is very tough, and to be selected is quite an honor.*

*Congratulations  
Joanna!!*

## Meet Michelle Wynton

Michelle was born in Pasadena, CA and has recently moved to Chicago from New York city. While there, she was working on her masters degree at the Manhattan School of Music. She received a Whittaker Scholarship to study with Glen Dicterow, the concert master of the NY Philharmonica, in orchestral studies. At UC Berkley, she earned a Bachelors in Psychology, with an emphasis in child psychology.

Currently, she is teaching Suzuki at ESTE, as well as with a Suzuki group in Chicago. Michelle is also teaching at the Music Center at North Shore and a Near North Montessori. For the last few years, she has been an active freelancer in the San Francisco, Chicago, and New York City areas, and has performed with such groups as the NYC Opera, the "Music of Andrew Lloyd Webber" and at a variety of orchestras, including the Elgin Symphony and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Michelle enjoys antique shopping, sightseeing, and trying out Chicago restaurants with friends.

Welcome her!

## News from the Library

Be on the lookout. We now have a separate file drawer, near the bookcase, for VCR tapes. We also have a complete list of inventory including books, cassettes, games, and VCR tapes. The list is in a blue folder on the top shelf of the bookcase.

Our library system seems to be working well. If you have any questions or suggestions feel free to let me know. We're always looking for ideas for purchases, too.



*Igor Stravinsky*  
What did I write?

- a. The Pines of Rome
- b. Rite of Spring
- c. Jupiter Symphony



Submitted by: RICHARD DEAN  
Date: DECEMBER 20

Please leave in newsletter box.



# New Student Directory:

The student and teacher directory for 1996-1997 was put in your family file in early December.

If you were enrolled by then, your name, address and phone are included. Since then, new student names are published in the newsletter - *The Write Note*. Please copy them into your directory for future reference.

I have been asked twice for the phone number of a teacher recently. Please note that the directory includes teachers names, which are underlined.

If you see errors in your listing, leave a note in the white basket on Mrs. Blum's desk. They will be corrected for next year.

We are still in an area code hiatus! Since the directory was published there have been the following changes:

Elizabeth Start - change area code to 630.  
Michelle Wynton - change area code to 773.

## New Students

Michael and Lynn Petry  
517 W. Chicago St.  
Elgin, IL 60123  
student: Heather 847-608-5043  
teacher: Blum

Sheila & Rob Luciani  
732 Juli Dr.  
So. Elgin, IL 60177  
student: Alexandra 847-608-8190  
teacher: Blum

Regina Mac Morris  
40W639 Russell Rd.  
Elgin, IL 60123  
student: Jacquelyn 847-464-5620  
teacher: Blum

Betty & Bruce Lambert  
15N278 Damisch Rd  
Hampshire, IL 60140  
student: Emily 847-742-9266  
teacher: Blum

Pete & Kim Almeida  
1640 College Green  
Elgin IL 60123  
student: Katelynn 847-742-7079  
teacher: Fradrowski

### PERFECT FIFTHS

Tuned by the sun  
Gently tested by the wind  
One vibrates and glows  
With nature's touch.

Every movement seems refined,  
No inward static distorts the mind,  
and one is synchronized  
And blends into  
The simple harmony of the whole.

### YOUNG AUDIENCE

Music answers questions  
never said  
And raises new ones  
with no answers.  
One stares at the hieroglyphs  
of sound with wondering ears.

by Lorraine Andrie

## BOOK COMPLETIONS

### BOOK 1

Brennan Biasotti - cello  
Charlie Klehm - violin  
Jason Song - violin  
Meaghan Fritz - cello

### BOOK 2

Trisha Kelenberger - violin  
Jae Ann Thietje - violin  
Justine Yoder violin

### BOOK 4

Hanna Jueng - violin



# Timeless Thoughts

by Lamar Blum

I read a statement today: "Children should be taught music before anything else; in learning to pay attention to graceful rhythms and harmonies their whole consciousness would become ordered." It sounds rather contemporary to those in a Suzuki program. We have read these ideas in Dr. Suzuki's books and have been told them by more than one Suzuki teacher. Our whole concept of how to teach music is based on early training, helping children in their learning processes and helping them become sensitive to beauty not only in music but also in the rest of their world.

What would my life be like if my parents hadn't prescribed to the above statement? I would have a hard time imagining my path. I like to hear and make music. I can't pass a piano without playing a few notes. I enjoy musical sounds. I am always eager to try another violin; another bow. Will I like what I hear? I can appreciate and contemplate different artists interpreting the same piece. Which sound do I like best? At the same time, I am sensitive to the sounds around me. My

ear picks up the sound of an egg cracking on the edge of my mixing bowl - a definite B flat or the pitch of a heater in Mr. Reinl's office is a A 440!

Was it always easy and fun to study an instrument as a child? No! Did my parents have to remind me to practice sometimes? Yes. Did I always want to take lessons? No. Do I now think it was worth the occasional confrontations? Yes. I have not met an adult who is glad that their parents let them stop taking music lessons. I have heard many regrets that no one "made" them keep studying.

Since John and I held to this value with our own children, I know the difficulties of the daily practice routine, long drive to lessons, extra trip for group classes, intense preparation for recitals, auditions and concerts and all that goes with each activity. Was it worth all of our efforts? I say yes. Do my children think it was worth it? When I ask them, they say yes.

By the way, did I mention that the opening quote was by Plato?

## Tonalization Contest

March 9, 1997

A tonalization contest! What's that? It is an opportunity to work on creating a bigger more beautiful tone and have fun doing it. All instruments will take part. Each student who can play Twinkle Theme or the tonalization written in book one or two is eligible. Your teacher will show you which one to play. Instruments will be grouped according to size. Each person will play their tonalization behind a screen so that judges (parents) can't see. They will only hear the student. They will choose the three stu-

dents with the tone that most meets the standard. Those students will then play in front of the judges for 1st, 2nd and third place. In the finals posture and instrument position will be included in the judging.

Set aside the date of **March 9** - a Sunday afternoon. Entry forms will be put in your family files 3 weeks before the date. The schedule will be posted on the Music House wall. Parents will be asked to be judges - but not the instrument that your child plays. So, step forth and have fun!



## A 90th Birthday Surprise

*Esther and Alex Fiebig gave a wonderful violin concert for their great Aunt in Germany.*

*To their surprise some of the older people began to sing along.*

*These songs we play are songs they sang when they were*

*young! Remember*

*Dr. Suzuki married a German lady the*

*same age as*

*these elder people at the party.*

*It was a terrific experience!*



*The answer to the question on pg. 3 - What did Stravinsky write is B.*

## SUZUKI CHALLENGE

Almost \$2,000 was raised for Melanoma Research! Forty-seven Suzuki students of 15 teachers participated by finding people to sponsor them for each minute they practiced or listened to their tape in a 6 day period. Margot Seigle, student of Lamar Blum, came in third by raising \$190.00!

**Congratulations Margot!!**



### PICKLE PACKERS & SANDWICH MAKERS: TAKE NOTE

Last year's Bach's Lunch was deemed so successful as a fundraiser, that by popular demand we are making it a Bach to Bach Affair. Suzuki Plus is planning once again to sponsor the lunch on the 1997 anniversary of Bach's birthday, March 21. Mark your calendars now.

You, too, can be a pickle packer, sandwich stacker, brownier baker or box (Bach's?) loader. Watch the Music House Bulletin Board for official information on these and other exciting tasks. For more information, contact Karen Maki, 695-7589. Johann Sebastian thanks you.



# *The Life of a Free-Lance Musician*

This article is one free-lance musician's outlook on the free-lance life. It is my view today, and is arrived at after pondering my years working into and in the business.

The life of a free-lance musician varies from musician to musician, and from day to day for most musicians. If you are the sort of person who wants to have a predictable schedule, it probably is not the life for you.

But, variety is the spice of life, right? And there is certainly variety here. That means you're not likely to get bored (unless you get a lucrative show where you're playing the same thing 8 times a week for a year or so -- then you need to balance the good money against possible brain death). It also means you may not know what you'll be doing next month -- or next week. This can make some people uncomfortable. I always have preferred the view that, since I work for so many people and/or organizations, if one goes under, or stops hiring me, it's not like I've lost my whole job. Only a percentage is gone, and something always seems to come along to fill in the gaps.

There are certain months that are traditionally lean, and others (notably December) where there is so much work, you find yourself having to turn a lot down due to schedule conflicts. Then you find yourself thinking the old clichés: "I'd be making a lot of money if I could do everything I'm being called for", and "I've got to seriously look into this cloning business". Since work is somewhat unpredictable, we all go through phases where we are booked to the hilt. Generally, if something fits into our schedules and pays all right, we are likely to take it, even if it makes an impossible schedule even worse for a while.

Most free-lance musicians I know don't just perform. Some have day jobs, or they do contracting. Many have private students or teach at colleges. Most are members of particular performing organizations, whose (albeit sparse) schedule guarantees a certain amount of work each year. I fall into all these categories. So there is some stability mixed in with the variety.

As a free-lance musician, you deal with a lot more than just showing up and playing well. You learn to balance loyalty and opportunity. You need to know when a new opportunity is important enough in the long range view to sub out on an employer who may have a history of consistently giving you work. Sometimes you make the wrong choice. Sometimes you'll never know.

You also learn that it doesn't matter how great a player is, if that person is unreliable (tardy or absent at jobs), or a pain to work with (arrogant or just irritable), that person is likely not to get the work he or she "deserves".

You also learn to play with people, even if you have different musical ideas. If you are a string player in an orchestra, no one is going to notice how much more beautiful your turn of phrase was as compared to that of the rest of the section; they will instead notice that you weren't playing with the section.

You also need to decide what you are worth. Yes, there are Union scales, but in different Locals, those vary, and there's also plenty of non-Union work to be had. I recently "lost out" on what seems to be a large chunk of money, because it was also a disproportionately large amount of work, and the amount per service was too far below what I felt was reasonable, especially considering the commute. A few years ago, I may have made a different decision. A few years ago, I also lived closer to the venue in question...

Speaking of commuting: If you are doing free-lance work, you'll be driving a lot. I average 20,000 to 25,000 miles a year. The hours usually don't coincide with rush hour, so it's not as bad as driving into Chicago each day for a 9 to 5. But you need a good car. Many years ago, I had car trouble which no mechanic seemed to be able to fix. I was often stranded, having to negotiate rides (and leaving the car with the nearest mechanic). The situation only lasted one week, until I managed to steal my car away from an inept mechanic who

seemed to be waiting for it to heal, and had it towed 30 miles to someone I knew could fix it. He did, and the car ran fine until I sold it and got a new one. It took two years for some people to stop asking me each time they saw me, "How's your car running?" I've always wondered how much that affected the number of calls I got from those people.

How about practice time? The busier you are, the harder it is to find the time. But of course, our livelihood depends on keeping our playing up. I'm jealous of the time I had in my college and graduate school days. I thought I was so busy, but was able to practice 4 to 6 hours a day. Now I squeeze in what I can, and am glad I've become wily in the ways of sight-reading and pithy practice.

There's also the issue of health insurance and retirement plans. As with many free-lance musicians, I am responsible for my own.

But, yes, the variety — and "glamour". In the last year, in addition to my teaching and contracting activities, I've played for many orchestras, for the Moody Blues, Moody Church, Tony Bennett, Mannheim Steamroller, the Olympic Torch, a Bull's play-off game, live on WFMT-FM (playing my own music) live on WGN radio (playing with a singer/songwriter), and in various parties and shows too numerous to remember. The venues vary, and you meet interesting people. Some jobs were great musical experiences, some weren't. Some were just darn good fun. But my approach is always to give each job my best, as a professional, and drink in what color there is to be appreciated when I get the chance. It is a very colorful world out there.



## FYI...

- \* Researchers now point to music as an important tool in kids learning not only the beat, but how to do math, science, and complex cognitive/analytical tasks. In fact, new research points out the strong casual relationship between music and overall learning skills;
- \* On average there is only one music teacher for every 500 students;
- \* One in four Americans plays a musical instrument;
- \* The U.S. had 62 million instrumentalists aged 5 and older in 1994, an increase of one million since 1991;
- \* 85% of current and former players began playing between the age of 5 and 14. Parents motivated 36% to start, 38% became interested on their own, and the rest were motivated by teachers and others; and
- \* Simple exposure to music seems to enhance brain function, too. Researchers found that college students scored higher on certain IQ tests after listening to ten minutes of Mozart, according to recent work at the University of California at Irvine.

# PERFORMANCE DRESS

Please keep in mind that Performance Dress will be required by all students for the Spring Program on Friday, May 16th, as well as for those students participating in the Easter Seals Telethon on Saturday, Feb. 15th.

All girl's attire must be purchased from the JC Penny's *Class Favorites* catalog.

The requirements are listed in your ESTE 1997 Handbook, and are as follows:

- ♦ Navy Jumper, white round collar blouse, plain white tights and black flat shoes for girls through the 5th grade.
- ♦ Navy pleated skirt, white round collar blouse, nude colored stockings and black flat shoes for girls 6th grade and up.
- ♦ Navy pleated twill shorts, white round collar blouse, black belt, plain white tights, and black flat shoes for all Cello girls.

Boy's attire is as follows:

- ♦ Navy dress slacks, white long sleeve dress shirt, solid navy tie, black belt, and black dress shoes.

Please check your child's Performance Dress now to be sure it will fit when the time comes. If you need to order from Penny's, a catalog is available in the Music House with the toll free number printed on the front. Please order soon to avoid backorders.

## SHOP AND SHARE

Were you 1 of the 28 people who used a Jewel Shop and Share coupon for Nov. 18, 19 or 20th? If so, be proud to know that you helped raise \$109.94 for Suzuki Plus. And wasn't it easy money — just hand the cashier the yellow Shop and Share coupon with the payment for your purchase, sign it after the amount is entered and Suzuki Plus automatically makes 5% profit from the total.

So be on the lookout for Shop and Share coupons in your Family File early in Feb. - just in time for those Valentine Parties. Please take additional coupons for your family and friends. It costs nothing extra for this service - so Shop and Share with Jewel.