

Spring '18 Newsletter

West County Strings

This past weekend, Calder and I were able to enjoy the sun and warmer weather and get out and finally do a bit of spring clean up in our yard. As we were doing so, I took note of the young oak tree that we planted the first year we moved into this house. On the one hand, it doesn't look like it's grown much - it's maybe a few feet taller and wider, but nothing particularly amazing. On the other hand, when I take note of it's trunk, it's gone from being something flimsy that I was afraid the wind would snap it two to something incredibly substantial and resilient. And I'm reminded that this tree's job, in it's first years of life, is to put down deep roots that will sustain it for a lifetime.



And so it is with learning the violin or viola. Some of you are in the "deep roots" period of the learning process. It may at times feel frustrating and like there's no visible growth in your playing, but rest assured that your work is in building up a foundation of good posture, technique, and ability that will sustain you for a lifetime. Others of you are experiencing that burgeoning of "visible growth." Your years of hard and careful work are allowing you to delve into the repertoire that you've heard others play and looked forward to playing yourself for years.

This year, I have been particularly encouraged by the growth I've seen in both areas - students making significant improvement to their foundational technique, and students growing in more advanced levels of musicianship and ability. Kirby and I are thankful for the opportunity to work with you and guide you in that learning process, and we're looking forward to the rest of this school year!

Important Dates

As we head into the final quarter of the school year, here are a few important dates you should make sure to add to your calendars:

Spring '18 Semester

- Mar. 26th-31st - Spring Break
- Apr. 9th - Summer Registration Opens
- Apr. 29th - Spring Festival Group Performance

- May 20th - Spring Solo Recitals
- May 19th - Summer Registration Due
- June 2nd - Spring '18 Semester Ends

Summer '18 Semester

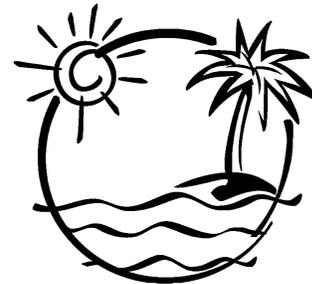
- Jun. 4th - Summer '18 Semester Begins
- Aug. 10th - Summer '18 Semester Ends

Spring Break

Our spring break this year is scheduled for the last week of March. This means we will have NO lessons or group classes from March 26-31. We hope that you'll be able to enjoy a little bit of rest and relaxation and, who knows, maybe log a few extra hours of practice with all that spare time!

Spring Break is also a great time to get your instrument tuned up for the remainder of the school year. If your bridge is looking warped, your strings are starting to fray, or your bow hair is dirty, damaged, or simply not holding rosin like it used to, take this opportunity to stop by your local shop and get things adjusted. If you need a recommendation on where to go, just let us know and we'll point you in the right direction.

Other than that, if your child/children's break falls this same week, we hope you are able to enjoy some wonderful family time, and we look forward to seeing you recharged when you return!



Spring Festival

After spring break, our next upcoming event is the Spring Festival group performance, which we look forward to every year. In traditional Suzuki "play-in" style, we start with the more advanced students on stage, and work our way down through select Suzuki repertoire until the stage is full of violinists and violists. Hearing the Twinkle Variations played by dozens of students is always a moving scene!

This year's Spring Festival is scheduled for the afternoon of **Sunday, April 29**. As in recent years, the Festival performance will be held in the sanctuary of Chesterfield Presbyterian Church. **Dress rehearsal** will begin at 1:00, and the **performance** at 3:00. The

sanctuary of CPC is *huge* and we'd love to provide our students with a great audience to play for. With that in mind, I'd like to challenge each and every one of you to bring at least one friend or neighbor *and* at least one extended family member to join us. After all, your child/children's hard work deserves to be heard!

We primarily prepare for the Spring Festival in our Tuesday night group classes. *Thank you* to all of you who have been regularly attending throughout the school year! If you'd like to take part in this year's Spring Festival, we'd love to have you! Join us for group classes on Tuesday evenings, and add the Festival repertoire to your review practice at home. Ask your teacher for more details.

Solo Recitals

Our other capstone event for the spring semester is our Spring Solo Recitals. Solo recitals serve as a primary means of individual motivation in these final few months of the school year, and give an opportunity to observe and reflect on how much has been learned through-out the year.

This year's Spring Solo Recitals are scheduled for the afternoon of **Sunday, May 20**, and like the Spring Festival will be held in the sanctuary of Chesterfield Presbyterian Church. Again, we encourage you to bring a friend or neighbor and some extended family!

We try to have each student's recital piece picked and polished one month before the recital itself, so be thinking with your teacher about what would be best to play. Piano rehearsals will be held throughout the week leading up to the 20th, and sign-ups will be made available as the date approaches.

Studio Pictures

Throughout the school year, amazing things are happening in private lessons, group classes, performances, and community events at West County Strings, and we'd like to capture more of them on camera! Trouble is, Kirby and I usually have a violin in one hand and a bow in the other, so we could use your help.



For the remainder of this school year, any pictures you take during lessons, group classes, or any other WCS event could be featured on our website or in article submissions to the Suzuki Association of the Americas. If you have not recently filled out a media release form and/or would not like your child featured in any media used at WCS, please let your teacher know. No names will ever be used in association with any photo or video content.

So, get your phones and cameras out and snap those pictures. We look forward to seeing the moments you capture!

Summer Opportunities

In addition to private lessons with me or Ms. Kirby, we encourage you to consider adding a music camp or two to your summer agenda. Here are a few that we recommend:

Sprunger Violin Camp

Who: Beginner-Intermediate Suzuki students (Books 1-4)
What: Daily Suzuki group classes, private lessons, theory and aural skills
When: Jun. 4th-9th, 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. with a concert Jun. 9th
Where: Kirkwood United Methodist Church
Why: SVC brings the feel of a Suzuki Institute to St. Louis on a small, personal, easily-accessible scale

SCCYO Summer Workshop

Who: Intermediate Suzuki students with developing sight-reading skills (Books 3-5)
What: Daily chamber group and orchestra rehearsals.
When: July 9th-13th, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Where: Lindenwood University
Why: SCCYO offers the opportunity to develop chamber, orchestral, and sight-reading skills—a great supplement to Suzuki education

Chicago Suzuki Institute

Who: Suzuki students of all ages and levels
What: Daily group technique, group repertoire, private lessons, for all students; chamber, orchestra, and supplemental classes depending on age and level
When: Jun. 30th - Jul. 8th
Where: Trinity International University
Why: Suzuki Institutes provide a highly-intensive, highly-motivational, family-friendly and focused learning experience that will positively impact your whole year

American Suzuki Institute

Who: Suzuki students of all ages and levels
What: Daily group technique, group repertoire, private lessons, for all students; chamber, orchestra, and supplemental classes depending on age and level
When: Jul. 22nd-28th, Jul. 29th-Aug. 4th
Where: Trinity International University
Why: see above!

As a final word on summer camps, workshops, and institutes: I urge you to give them serious consideration. We've seen SO many students (and their parents!) come back rejuvenated, motivated, improved, and excited to learn. If you're looking for a fun way to spend some time as a family this summer, look into these opportunities for your family!