

Suzuki Strings Program Parent Packet

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Dear Suzuki Strings Parent,

Welcome to the supportive artistic community of the CMI Suzuki Strings Program at the UO School of Music and Dance! The SSP has a long record of excellence over the past 25 years and offers high quality string instruction with UO faculty and trained graduate students. Housed in the musically vibrant UO School of Music building, the Suzuki Strings Program offers collaborative, motivational classes and performance opportunities, along with individual lessons that cater to diverse learning styles, helping your child develop to their full potential.

My musical career has spanned three decades of teaching and performing, including initially founding the Suzuki Strings Program, Chamber Players and Violin/Viola Pedagogy specialization at the University of Oregon. I have taught students of all ages and levels, from beginning through advanced college students, both in Oregon and in Arizona at Northern Arizona University, where I taught for 16 years. I was elected president of Oregon ASTA and served as ASTA president for the state of Arizona, helping establish numerous state-wide programs and events. Many of my violin students have become professional musicians, been awarded prizes and concerto opportunities, but my primary goal is to help your child reach their highest potential, leading to a life-long skill and love of music.

As the parent of two grown daughters who have progressed through the Suzuki literature to advanced repertoire on violin and cello, I am sensitive to the support and needs of parents in this process of musical and personal development. I chose to return to CMI at UO because I believe in the profound impact learning classical music at a high level can have in the life of a child and the positive ripple effect a strong community music program has for the larger community. As an integral part of the CMI mission, I am also deeply committed to advancing pedagogical training and professional opportunities for the next generation of string teachers.

This is a challenging journey of the most rewarding kind, working together with your child to develop a lifelong skill, deep artistic expression, musical and personal growth, and a love

of the arts. Suzuki Strings at CMI offers a full Suzuki experience of individual lessons combined with group classes, as well as solo and group performances in the Eugene area's finest performance halls.

Please take a few moments to read this packet and familiarize yourself with the philosophy/history of the Suzuki Method, a method that has proven to be the most successful and impactful pedagogical approach for young string students worldwide over the past half century. Also included in this Parent Packet, is an annual schedule that represents the thorough group class and performance offerings CMI provides, from beginner to intermediate repertoire/ note reading, through advanced repertoire and an opportunity to participate in Chamber Players, the most prestigious precollege chamber music experience in this region.

We have also included for your convenience some helpful resources for acquiring or upgrading your child's instrument and supportive materials (chinrests, shoulder rests, rosin, Suzuki Book, CD or digital recording). If you are a new family exploring the program, please make sure you consult with me before acquiring the proper size and quality of instrument. Lastly, I want to let you know that I am available as a resource for you at any step along the way to answer your questions and concerns and I encourage you to reach out. Thank you for valuing music education in the life of your child and for choosing/exploring the CMI Suzuki Strings Program at the UO School of Music and Dance!

Sincerely,

Shelley

Shelley Rich

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Here is an example the SSP annual calendar of lessons and events:

SSP 2023-2024 Calendar

Thursday, September 28, Tykeson Performance Hall: Welcome Back Play-In

September 25 - September 29: Fall Lessons begin

Thursday, October 5: Fall Group Classes begin

Thursday, November 2, 4:30 & 5:30 pm Tykeson Performance Hall: Solo Recitals

Thursday, December 7, 5:00 pm, Beall Concert Hall: Suzuki Strings Holiday Concert

December 11- January 7: Winter Recess

January 8 - January 12: Winter Lessons begin

Thursday, January 11: Winter Group Classes begin

Sunday, March 10: 1:30 & 2:30 pm, Tykeson Performance Hall: Solo Recitals

March 17- 31: Spring Break

April 1 - April 5: Spring Lessons begin

Thursday, April 4: Spring Group Classes begin

Saturday, May 18, Music Room 163: Solo Certificate Day

Thursday, June 6, 5:00 pm, Beall Concert Hall: Final Celebration Concert

Weekly Group Classes

Group classes take place at the following times on select weekdays:

Thursdays 4:30 – 5:00 pm: Early Book 1 Group classes

Thursdays 5:10 – 6:00 pm: Books 2-3 Group classes and Note Reading

Thursdays 5:10 – 6:00 pm: Chamber Prep

Saturdays 10:15-10:45am: Beginners

Summer lessons available Mid-June through Mid-September:

Weeks available for summer lessons will be emailed to you by your instructor.

The Suzuki Method: History and Philosophy

The Suzuki Method began taking shape in 1945, when Shinichi Suzuki founded the Talent Education Institute in Japan. He had had an epiphany: if every child can learn to speak their native language, why couldn't every child learn to play an instrument? Suzuki went on to develop a method of teaching music that was based on the way children learn to speak. His motivation was to use music education to create kind-hearted, sensitive, and loving young minds in the hope that they might bring about change and make the world a better place. Suzuki observed how children learn to speak a language and used many of the same components to teach music, including early learning, listening, positive environment, repetition, review, parent involvement, and learning from other children.

These teaching principles proved remarkably successful for the students in the Talent Education program in Japan and began to draw the attention of music teachers in Japan and in other countries around the world. The Suzuki Method was introduced to the Americas in 1958, when a video of Suzuki's students was shown at a US music conference. This eventually led to the founding of the Suzuki Association of the Americas (SAA) in 1972. The SAA aspires to improve the quality of life in the Americas through Suzuki education and create a learning community which embraces excellence and nurtures the human spirit. The SAA offers training, resources, and support for teachers and parents throughout the Americas in the hope of making Suzuki learning accessible and available for all.

Suzuki believed that music education is a "means to an end that embraces far more than music." Learning music teaches students problem solving skills, the ability to express themselves, organization, time management, motor control, empathy, and more. -Beyond these skills, Suzuki understood the power of music to change the human heart. His purpose in creating the Suzuki Method was not only to create skilled musicians, but "to create persons of a beautiful mind and fine ability." At UO, the CMI Suzuki Strings Program fosters a love of learning, development of cooperation skills, a positive learning environment, and a supportive performance community.

The Parent's Role

In the Suzuki Method, parents are very involved and present for every step of the learning process. Understanding how to support your child in this process is perhaps the most important ingredient to ensure their success. Plan on being present and engaged at group classes, during lessons, and in home practice. At home, you can help by providing your child with guidance, encouragement, and an interruption-free environment. In group classes and lessons, your individual instructor will provide the information and guidance needed to help ensure your child's success. Please refer to page 10 for a list of specific ways you can help your child as a Suzuki Parent!

Group Classes

One of the most important language learning concepts that has made music learning through the Suzuki Method successful for children is involving children in group classes as well as individual lessons. Group classes in the CMI Suzuki Program occur at the School of Music and Dance each week of the academic calendar in Fall, Winter, and Spring. This opportunity allows students to learn from each other, hear each other playing shared repertoire, and provides inspiration and motivation. Our program also provides mentorship and teaching opportunities for University of Oregon string graduate students. This enhances the richness of the UO Suzuki Strings learning community and offers a direct connection between Suzuki students and families to university students, faculty and visiting artists' live performances at the UO School of Music and Dance!

How to Get Started

Students will need to acquire a teacher approved, appropriately sized, high-quality instrument, bow, chin rest, and shoulder rest. Having the correct size and appropriate quality (not eBay or Amazon!) is vital to your child's success when learning to play the violin. The program director will be a part of this process and will help to appropriately size the instrument to your child at their first meeting. Families interested in joining the Suzuki Strings Program should 1) complete the online inquiry form at uocmi.com/contact-us and 2) plan to observe a SSP Thursday afternoon group class to meet the director, Shelley Rich. At that meeting, the correct size of instrument will be recommended. Do not purchase or rent an instrument before receiving the director's recommendation.

You will also need a way to listen to the music in the Suzuki Violin School, Volume 1. You can purchase a digital recording by scanning the QR code below, but it is recommended that you purchase a copy of the book that comes with a CD.

Other Materials:

- Notebook, for taking notes in lessons.
- Suzuki Violin School, Volume 1, Violin Part
- Tuner and Metronome (or apps)
- Mirror
- Shoulder sponge or shoulder rest
- Students with sensitivity to metal may require a chin rest cover



SSP Inquiry Form



Suzuki Vol. 1 with C



Suzuki Vol. 1 Recordings

Acceptable Shoulder Rests and Chin Rests:

Everest Shoulder Rest



Kun Shoulder Rest



Custom Sponge



Wittner Chin Rests



Guarneri Chin Rest



Rental Options:

Eugene Violin Shop
2045 W. 12th Ave.
Eugene, OR 97402
(520) 276-2007
eugeneviolinshop.com

David Kerr Violin Shop, Inc
4451 S.E. 28th Avenue
Portland, OR 97202
(503) 238-4515
kerrviolins.com

Robertson & Sons Violin Shop
3201 Carlisle Blvd. NE
Albuquerque, NM 87110
(505) 889-2999
robertsonviolins.com

Specific ways you can help your child as a Suzuki Parent:

- Provide a teacher approved, appropriately sized, high-quality instrument, bow, chin rest, and shoulder rest (see page about chin rests/shoulder rests)
- Be engaged in the individual lesson as an active listener and note-taker
- Participate in group class activities that involve the parent
- Find a consistent and uninterrupted daily practice time: frequency of practice is more important than length when training muscle memory. For young beginners, 2-3 short sessions a day is better than one long session
- Treat your practice like a homeschool subject: your child will value the importance of practice by how lightly you put it aside
- Be fully present and attentive during lessons, group classes, and practice
- Maintain a curious, helpful, and calm demeanor during practice
- Create a musical environment, including exposure to recorded and live performances
- Bring concerns regarding practice to your teacher's attention.

CMI Lesson Policies

Make-Up Lesson Policy:

If a teacher is absent from a scheduled lesson, the lesson will be made up. Each student is allowed one make-up lesson due to illness or family emergency. No refunds or make-up lessons will be granted for additional absences.

Withdrawal Policy:

Students wishing to withdraw from the program must file a written notice to the CMI Buisness office.

Thank you for reviewing this packet! We endeavor to help you and your child have a successful, high quality musical experience and build life-long skills. CMI Suzuki Strings Program students and families are important participants in the larger community at the UO School of Music and Dance!