

a publication of the Denison University Suzuki Program

*"A child
who has
no opportunity
to listen
to any
good music
gains
nothing.*

*If he listens to
out-of-tune
music,
he will grow
to have
out-of-tune
abilities
in music."*

--Shinichi Suzuki

February Groups:

Feb. 10 and 24

--Flute
--Piano
--Violin
--Cello

Feb. 9 and 23

--Palmer Piano

*Check with your
teacher for specifics.*

The Care and Feeding of Your Instrument

*Whether you're renting or you've made the purchase
of a lifetime, we've gathered up information
to keep your instrument healthy.*

LOVING CARE FOR YOUR BEST FRIEND: YOUR FLUTE!

By Linda Habig

How exciting! A brand new, shiny, silvery flute that will become your best friend! Here's what your flute is telling you so that it will stay as healthy and happy as the day it came home to live with you.

Your Flute Loves to be Clean

- Your flute loves clean hands, so wash or rinse your hands before playing.
- If you've eaten or drunk anything recently, brush your teeth or rinse out your mouth with water before playing the flute.
- Your flute gets really upset if you eat or drink anything, including candy or gum, during the time when you are playing it. It just doesn't like sticky air blown through it. So wait for your snack until after you play. But it's ok to drink water during your playing time.
- Your flute hates the way silver polish feels, so don't use it on your flute.

Your Flute Asks You to Handle It Gently

- Your flute is strong and can play millions of notes and songs for a whole lot of years, if you're gentle every time you pick it up.
- When putting it together, hold the parts without the keys and gently push the pieces together. Linda will show you how, and help.
- When you're resting between songs, hold the flute where there aren't any keys.
- Your flute will tell you that it doesn't like to ride on bicycles, or in luggage with wheels, because they're too bouncy and hurt the flute. Flutes do like to ride in backpacks and other bags that you carry.

Your Flute Likes to Sleep When You're Not Playing It

- When you're not playing, your flute likes to take a nap in its dark and quiet case. So be sure to put it back in its case when you're not playing it.
- Before you let your flute go to sleep in its case, wipe it off with a soft rag. Also, wipe out the inside with the swab stick and a soft cloth. Put the edge of the cloth through the hole in the swab, and then wrap some cloth around the end of the swab stick. (Note to Moms: cotton rags are best, and use ones without a lot of threads and lint. Wash and dry them without fabric softener.)

Keep Your Flute Happy and Comfortable

- Your flute will be very unhappy if you let it get too hot, too cold, too wet or too dry. So don't leave it in the car for very long, or outdoors, or any place else that it might be uncomfortable.
- But your flute does love to be played outside! So take it outside and play it, in the woods, in your yard, by the ocean or a lake, or anywhere. Just bring it right back indoors with you and put it back in its case for a nap afterward.

String Prices at The Loft Violin Shop

Violin:

Thomastik Dominant:

\$53.10

for the full sized set

Helicore:

\$40.30

for the full sized set

Viola:

Thomastik Dominant:

\$92.80

for the full sized set

Helicore:

\$56.40

for the full sized set

Cello:

Thomastik Dominant:

\$172.50

for the full sized set

Helicore:

\$144.00

for the full sized set

Added bonus:

The Loft will put the strings on your instrument for you.

Caring for Your Strings

By Stephanie Dantzer

When you first acquire an instrument through rental or purchase, it will come with a set of strings already on it. At first, your child's teacher will tune the strings every time you come to class. All you need to do to care for the strings is keep them clean and replace them when they are worn out.

To care for the strings while they are on the instrument, avoid any build-up of rosin that may make the instrument sound fuzzy by wiping off the strings each time the student finishes playing. Each student should have a clean cloth in his instrument case for this purpose. The cloth should be soft, dry cotton.

If you notice there is an excess of rosin on the strings, you can - **carefully**, so as not to get any on the instrument – put some rubbing alcohol on a cotton ball or cloth (damp, not dripping) and gently wipe the strings to dissolve the rosin. You may want to put a protective cloth under the strings to keep the alcohol off of the instrument. In general, students should make a habit of using the cloth to wipe off the strings, the instrument, and the stick of the bow each time they finish playing. If left on, the rosin can deteriorate the finish. Clean hands are also important when

playing, because the rosin won't stick to dirty bow hair.

When a student plays about 15 to 20 minutes a day, their strings will need to be replaced about every 6 months. If you rent from the Loft in Columbus, they will replace the strings for you at no cost, as long as you use the same type strings. If you rent from Robertson & sons or if you purchased an instrument, you are responsible for buying and putting the strings on yourself.

When you need to replace a set of strings, ask your child's teacher what type of strings you should buy. They will probably be able to tell you what is on the instrument and what type strings you should buy.

What you need to know:

- loop or ball end (the part that attaches to the fine tuners).
- wound E string (for violins)
- light, medium or heavy gauge
- the size of the instrument
- type of strings

Once you know what you need, you can go to a store or web site. When you buy strings, you want them to be new, so try to avoid buying from a business that does not have a high volume of string sales, as their stock may be old.

Additional String Information

In the beginning of January, prices were compared for Thomastik Dominant and Helicore medium gauge, wound E (where applicable) strings for the violin, viola and cello from 7 businesses. The first 4 have stores in the Newark or the Columbus area:

- Colonial Music
www.musicarts.com
- The Loft Violin Shop
www.theloftviolinshop.com
- Martin Music
- Sam Ash
www.samash.com

The other 3 are on line:

- Shar Music
www.sharmusic.com
- Southwest Strings
www.southweststrings.com
- Young Musicians
www.ymonline.com

The highest prices, by far, were at Martin Music in Newark. Next highest were at Colonial Music (in Westerville, Mt. Vernon, and Reynoldsburg).

The best prices locally were at The Loft Violin Shop, where they recently reduced their prices in order to be more competitive with the online sources, and Sam Ash, both in Columbus.

In general, the best deals are found online, especially because the sites don't charge for shipping on strings-only orders over a certain dollar amount. They all list their prices on their websites, so it is an easy task to find the best price once you know specifically what you need. You can purchase an entire set or single strings.

Once your student advances to the point of needing or wanting different kinds of strings, the Loft will let you try different sets on your instrument. It's best if you call ahead so they are sure there is a practice room available upstairs for you to use.

It is best to have an extra set of strings in the case, either new or used, in the event a string unwinds or becomes damaged. Strings can be stored in their original packages.

Be sure that you check with your teacher before you invest in new strings.

a publication of the
Denison University
Suzuki Program

Our Mission...

...to create a positive musical learning partnership among faculty, students, and their parents/practice partners by following the philosophical principles and educational methods developed by Dr. Shinichi Suzuki so that children can grow into loving and respectful individuals who will have a positive effect on their world.

For more information about our program, please contact:

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Tuning 101: A Workshop for Practice Partners

by Robin Brown

The tuning workshop on Saturday, January 27, led by Rebecca White, a Suzuki violin teacher and mom, was well-attended, very helpful, and fun! We met up in a spacious lecture hall in the beautiful Burton D. Morgan Center on the main campus. The Loft Violin Shop provided 20 violins for us to use and made available chromatic tuners for purchase.

To start, Mrs. White had all the practice partners get out their tuners and look at the indicator needle and light while she played her open strings slowly with long full bows. If the pitch was flat (low), she turned fine tuners to the right (clockwise) to make the pitch higher. If the pitch was sharp (high), she turned the fine tuner to the left (counterclockwise) to make the pitch lower. With indicators straight up and green lights indicating that the violin pitch of each string matched the tuner, she was good to go! Now it was everyone else's turn!

Wow, some of those violins from the Loft were really out of tune! They were recently used at a violin petting zoo with the Columbus Symphony Orchestra. Some had pegs loose, one briefly lost its fine tuner screw on the floor, etc. Kudos to all the practice partners for getting their violins tuned so well!!!

Here are Mrs. White's three steps for tuning your violin:

Step 1: Turn on your tuner (make sure it is calibrated or set to 440 Hz, which is the "concert pitch" frequency of A). Most people tune their A string first, then E, then D, then G. Play the A string (and each string thereafter) with long slow bows. The tuner will tell you what note you are playing and whether you are flat (needle to the left) or sharp (needle to the right) with a red light indicator or whether your pitch is right on (indicator needle straight up with a green light). Adjust your fine tuners accordingly (as described above). Rebecca said to focus on what the tuner is telling you right away while the bow is on the string. Once the bow has left the string, the vibrations change and the needle will fluctuate (usually toward being flat).

Step 2: Play the pitches of each of your strings (G, D, A, E) on your tuner by holding the "Sound" button for a second and then pushing it repeatedly to get the note you want. See if the pitches on the tuner match the pitches of each string.

Step 3: Play double stops of the adjacent strings (A and E together, D and A, then G and D). These should sound like the interval known as a perfect fifth (A to E is five notes apart, i.e., A B C D E). The first notes of "Twinkle, Twinkle" are a fifth apart, a great way to remember what a fifth sounds like!

"Play Twinkle in C and D"

That was the only note written in my daughter's notebook after my husband was kind enough to take our daughter (and her little brother) to her piano lesson. "Was that all that Mrs. Kirsh said to do?" I asked a little nervously when they got home. "I think so," was my husband's response. So I asked my daughter the same question. Her answer was different. "No, Mom! She wants way more than that." Thankfully, she filled me in on most of the week's assignments.

Taking notes is important even when the regular practice partner attends weekly lessons. Notes not only give us the week's assignments, but they remind us what is needed musically. Haven't we all had to make sure that our kids "add lifts in the 'B' section," or "play the 'A' section like popcorn?" I always need to look at my notes the day after our lesson to refresh my memory, but they aren't needed as much as the week progresses. Notes also come in handy if there is a discrepancy between what my daughter thinks the teacher said and what I think the teacher said. Our rule is whatever is written in the notes wins. And a hint to everyone: when your husband or wife takes the kids to the lesson instead, ask them to take notes for you!