



ANN ARBOR SUZUKI INSTITUTE OF MUSIC

NEWSLETTER

May 2023

www.annarborsuzuki.com

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*The commitment of the Ann Arbor Suzuki Institute is to the most fundamental principles of Dr. Shinichi Suzuki, that talent is not inborn, but can be developed. We believe that every child can learn, and we are free from all discrimination. We are a non-profit 501(c) (3) organization which endeavors to educate parents and children in the Suzuki philosophy, using music to enrich their lives and the community. In this way, we help create a better world.*  
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On the Importance of Being a Good Audience Member

Shannon Jansma

As the school year wraps up and final performances abound, it's a great time to check in with your child about how to be a good audience member. Although all our AASI kids are generally great at following the audience "rules", and you are probably aware of all the reasons why it is good for your child to perform in front of an audience, we don't talk much about what your child gains from being a part of the audience! Here are five reasons why it is good to attend live performances with your child.

1. Live performances are a good chance to practice listening skills. Guide your child to listen for specific phrasing gestures or articulations. For example, "Let's listen and see if there is a forte section in this next song!" or "Can you hear any choppy notes?". My favorite listening game is "find the twinkle" - for each of the twinkle rhythms you hear in later repertoire, you get a point! You can also guide older students to listen to guess which key the piece is in, what hand position it uses, or try to follow one part of the piano accompaniment instead of the melody.
2. Learning to listen quietly with your body is an important skill. This ties into mindfulness - how can I be aware of my body and let it be still without feeling constrained? It helps kids calm themselves and pay better attention to the outside world. The first step is keeping voices quiet or silent. Some people need physical "jobs" to free their mind up for listening, like tapping fingers or folding paper. Slightly more experienced audience members can also think about keeping bodies quiet to avoid drawing attention.
3. It expands your child's ear! They might be hearing pieces they'll learn eventually, they might be hearing old songs and remembering how they worked so hard to get them down, they might be hearing something totally new - but each type of listening has benefits. When children only hear music on one type of instrument, it limits their ear to the tone and range of music that's

available. If we give children's ears a broad sample of the music available, we allow them many more chances to grow and flourish!

4. Children learn from each other! When your child listens to the recordings, they are hearing one adult's version of each piece. This is useful, but it is also beneficial for students to hear the repertoire with childlike expression, and see the piece accomplished using a child's build. It makes the music more accessible to young students, and gives them ideas they might incorporate into their own playing.

5. Watching live performances motivates your child to practice and progress! When students see other children performing advanced pieces, they have something to look forward to as they grow as players. It demonstrates how their focus and hard work can pay off!

As children strive to become better listeners and audience members, they will learn better focus. Although your child may not be the perfect audience member, it is an important skill to build and grow with practice. Happy listening!

Cultural Heritage Spotlights

In the interest of inclusivity and representation, please join the AASI in celebrating the diverse and fascinating heritage of classical music.

We're celebrating both AAPI and Jewish heritage months this May! Classical music has been hugely influenced by the contributions of composers and performers of Asian and Jewish descent.

You can learn about some notable classical composers of Asian/Pacific Island heritage [on this website](#), and hear a variety of classical music composed by Asian people on this [Spotify playlist](#).

You can read up on and listen to influential Jewish classical composers [here](#), and [here's](#) the playlist of many wonderful pieces by Jewish composers.

Ann Arbor Suzuki Institute Faculty, Sharing Both Joy and Talent!

Violin: Kathy Almquist, Judy Blank, Kevin Horne, Shannon Jansma, Lauren Pulcipher, Deborah Stanton, Anna Weller, Wendy Zohar

Viola: Kathy Almquist, Wendy Zohar

Cello: Alice Greminger, Elizabeth Marsh

Bass: Derek Weller

Guitar: Terry Farmer, Vera Flaig, MaryLou Roberts

For more information on the Suzuki Method, visit: www.suzukiassociation.org