

Getting the most out of lessons and home practice

Relish wrong notes. Better yet, realize that when approached with the right attitude and perspective, there are no such things as wrong notes.



Bring your full presence, attentiveness, playfulness, and curiosity to each practice session and performance. With young students, this is also very important for the parent helping to practice. This helps relieve tension, which makes a vitally huge difference in so many ways.

When we are playing or performing a piece already codified, already written a certain way by someone else, there are only either notes that the composer did not write or the note that he or she did compose. When we are improvising and composing ourselves, there are only either notes that we like or notes we don't like.

In the case of a piece already composed by someone else, when a note different than what is in the composition is played, always ask why you (or your child) played it that way. Often, it is either because you are (or your child is) internally hearing it differently than the composition calls for, or you forgot to audiate (see last month's column) altogether. In the former case, more listening to recordings of the piece is called for or, alternatively for more advanced students, more sightsinging done accurately will be helpful. In the latter case, simply start the section (or the piece, if the note happened towards the beginning) again after first hearing it inside, and remember to sing it inside—or even out loud when practicing—while playing this time.

Sometimes, there is a different cause. Sometimes it is mechanical. Maybe the "wrong" note played by you (or your child) was in the composition just a few notes back. Maybe it is a note coming up and some notes were inadvertently skipped. In the case of string players, maybe a high 3 (or whatever the finger may be) was just played on a different string, and the finger forgot to return to normal when it hopped across. In these cases, address the mechanical consideration, gain clarity on what the composer did write, and seek to play the passage the way the composer wrote it, for a pre-decided number of times in a row.

At other times, the hand other than the one that played the "wrong" note is not yet secure and therefore requires more attention. In the case of string players, this often happens when the bowing is still a struggle and the mind needs to give it so much attention that not enough brain power is left over to process the left hand well. In these cases, simply practice hands separately more.

By seeking to discover why you (or your child) put the "wrong" note there, that note becomes the most valuable note played during your practice time. There always is a reason—sometimes as simple and common as neglecting to audiate, while at other times there is a technique yet needing to be learned or solidified—and once you discover that reason and address it accordingly, each "wrong" note becomes the doorway to knowing and playing the piece better than ever before. You have turned your "wrong" note into cause for great celebration!

**Is nwisc@nwisuzuki.com in your address book?
Do we have your current email address?**



Not only statements are sent from nwisc@nwisuzuki.com, but also information about upcoming events and special opportunities. Make sure you don't miss out on anything—add nwisc@nwisuzuki.com to your “safe list” or address book for your email account that you provided with your registration. If your email address changes, please promptly notify us.

Thank you!

Parent Night

Tuesday, March 18, 7:30—8:30 p.m. is scheduled to be a different sort of parent night. So that parents may have a chance to talk freely amongst themselves, this will be a night for parents sans NWISC teachers. A parent will be asked to moderate the discussion, and an NWISC teacher will return at 8:30. Please take advantage of this opportunity so that group lessons may be maximized as a time to listen attentively and learn.

Spring Break

As per the NWISC calendar, there will be no lessons or classes March 24-28. We wish everyone a safe and happy celebration of spring, and we look forward to resuming lessons on March 31!

Recital on March 14

Whether as participant or audience member, please join us Friday, March 14, at 7:00 p.m. for a student recital of mixed instruments, mixed ages, and mixed skill levels.

American Suzuki Journal

With many thanks to Sally DuBois, sample issues of the *American Suzuki Journal* are now available for browsing while you are at the conservatory. They are in the wall rack, located in front of you and to the right as you enter the conservatory. We highly recommend that each family invest in a subscription to this publication, for the sake of its helpful, motivational, and inspiring articles in each issue. Subscriptions are available via membership in the Suzuki Association of the Americas. Families can become Associate Members for \$35 per year. Membership forms are also in NWISC's wall rack. Help yourselves!

