

a publication of the Denison University Suzuki Program

## Ready to Read Music: a Guide for Parents

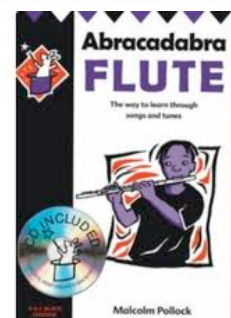
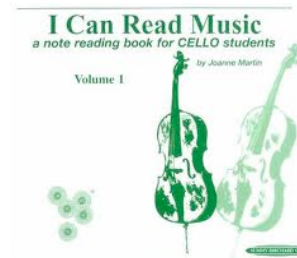
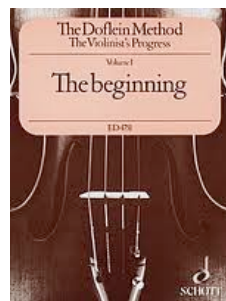
by Maryfrances Kirsh and Linda Habig

We delay music reading until our students are “reading ready.” We look for signs: cooperative spirit, consistent listening and practice habits, and consistent playing technique. Mrs. Kirsh likes to start her piano and violin students around the end of Book 1 or the beginning of Book 2, but recognizes that it depends on each individual student.

Mrs. Habig starts her flute students reading by singing and clapping the rhythms on rhythm flash cards that present rhythms in simple, incremental learning steps. They sit on the floor for a few minutes in early lessons, clapping, singing and talking about these rhythms. When a student has built some confidence around rhythms, we add note values, and gradually transition to reading. As a student learns note values and rhythms, she and the student will begin writing the rhythms and values on over-sized staff paper.

It is very important for our practice partners to be consistent in including pre-reading and reading activities in each practice session. Repetition is the key to becoming fluent music readers!

Being aware of the beat or pulse in music is crucial in becoming a confident music reader. Mrs. Kirsh requires tapping the rhythm and counting the beats out loud from the very beginning of reading.



Mrs. Habig teaches rhythmic patterns early, so that the student recognizes these patterns within a piece of music.

Each teacher has his or her own unique way of introducing and teaching music reading. We recommend that parents follow the teachers' instructions carefully and do no more and no less than the teacher asks.

## Granville Christmas Candlelight Walking Tour

Centenary United Methodist Church  
102 East Broadway Granville, OH 43023

### Dress Rehearsal: Friday, November 30, 2012

- Strings: 4 p.m. - 6 p.m.
- Group Class Prep: 4:30 - 6 p.m.
- Pianists: 6 p.m. - 7 p.m.
- Flutes: 6:30 - 8 p.m.

### Performances: Saturday, Dec. 1, 2012

- Pianists and Flutists: 2 p.m.
- Strings and GCP: 3:15 p.m.
- Arrival times vary. Please ask your teacher.

### Performance attire:

- Red Denison Polo (check to make sure yours fits!)
- Black shirt may be worn underneath
- Black pants or skirt
- Black socks and shoes

# WINTER 2013 FESTIVAL

A Celebration of Learning, Friendships, and Fun

[www.denison.edu/suzuki](http://www.denison.edu/suzuki)

January 11, 12, and 13, 2013

Flutes in the Frost  
Polar Pianos  
Strings in the Snow

Keep the weekend open so you can enjoy all of the learning opportunities!

# Bach and “The Well Tempered Clavier”

by Erin Lewis

Johann Sebastian Bach was born on March 21<sup>st</sup>, 1685 in Eisenach, Germany. He came from a very long family line of musicians, so it was no surprise that young Bach wanted to learn to play music. His father taught him to play the violin and the harpsichord and no doubt his siblings helped him learn as well. When he was only 9 years old however, both his parents passed away, so he was sent to live with his older brother. In 1700, Bach traveled with a friend to Lüneburg to attend school. There he could pay his school fees by singing in the St. Michael’s choir and church. This school had a large impact on Bach as a young man due to its musical tradition. While he was there, he not only sang in the choir as a soprano, but also played the violin and harpsichord. Although most of his compositions from this time have not been discovered, it is probable that he spent a good amount of time writing while at school as well. When he left Lüneburg, he spent the next few years as an organist in various churches and schools. Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Cöthen found Bach to be an excellent musician and in 1717 offered him a position. It was during his time in Cöthen that Bach wrote many of his greatest violin works and sonatas. His famed Brandenburg Concertos were also composed during this time in tribute to the Duke of Brandenburg.

One of Bach’s most widely-known works is his *Das Wohltemperierte Klavier* or *The Well-Tempered Clavier* which he started while he was in Cöthen. “Well tempered” refers to the type of tuning that Bach used. Although it is uncertain whether he used completely equal temperament (each octave divided into 12 equal frequency ratios), we do know that he was at least using something very close to it. Bach wanted to show that by using his method of tuning, compositions in all 12 major and minor keys could sound pleasing to the ear. He also composed the works to be used in teaching his students. Two editions of *The Well-Tempered Clavier* were written by Bach, the first of which was published in 1723, the second being completed in 1740.

Bach followed a pattern while writing both of these collections which consisted of both a prelude and fugue in each of the 48 keys. He started in C major, followed by C minor and continued working his way chromatically up the scale writing in every major key followed by its parallel minor. Many of the preludes focused on one or two specific melodic or rhythmic concepts, enforcing Bach’s theme of using the works as teaching material. The fugues, made up of two or more voices built on one main theme, are all different in their sound and moods. The result of these short pieces put together is two collections of music which still fascinate musicians today.

As Bach finished writing his *Well-Tempered Clavier*, he noticed his sight beginning to go bad. Despite this, he continued writing music, though several of his pieces were never finished. In an effort to help the condition of his eyes, Bach agreed to have surgery but because of the poor medical practices of the day, he was left completely blind. In 1750, he suffered from a stroke and died shortly thereafter on July 28<sup>th</sup>, 1750.

Bach’s influence has been seen in compositions and their composers throughout history. Specifically, *The Well-Tempered Clavier* has been an essential to many teachers and students alike. Schumann said “Let the *WTC* be your daily bread. Then you will certainly become a solid musician.” Bach will undoubtedly always be remembered as one of the best musicians of the baroque era and to many as one of the greatest musicians of all time.



A statue of J.S. Bach in Eisenach, Germany.



A page of original manuscript of the Ab Major Fugue from the *Well-Tempered Clavier*.

“Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction, and skillful execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternatives.”

~William A. Foster



*a publication of the  
Denison University  
Suzuki Program*



Ruby and Maria enjoy the fact that they keep getting taller but Mrs. Kirsh and Miss Katie do not.



Group class is great for reviewing posture and pieces in a silly and fun way. Who said relay races were just for running?

**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.



George, the stink bug, wanders his way up and down the keyboard a few times before flying off in search of different sounds.



Mrs. Kirsh enjoys the occasional challenge of an unfamiliar instrument.

For more information about our program, please contact:

Jim Van Reeth,  
program director

Phone:  
(740) 975-4644

E-Mail:  
vanreethj@denison.edu

A piano group class enjoys a lively game of "Musical Chairs."

