

NIU SUZUKI VIOLIN GRADUATION INFORMATION

History of Suzuki Graduations: Dr. Suzuki would wake up around 5:00 a.m. every morning and listen to hundreds of tape recordings sent to him from all over Japan. Dr. Suzuki incorporated a Suzuki Graduation System where students, when they reached certain playing levels, would record several polished review pieces and in return receive Dr. Suzuki's constructive comments about their playing. This was a celebration of accomplishment. It was never a "pass or fail" situation since Dr. Suzuki trusted that a teacher would only have a student prepare and submit a recording when they were musically ready. Dr. Suzuki also knew it was the process of preparing these recordings where the real learning and progress took place.

Upholding this tradition at NIU: We, the Suzuki violin teacher's at NIU, wish to continue Dr. Suzuki's vision of excellence and create a graduation system that strengthens our program collectively and individually.

Below you will find pieces that correlate with 10 graduation levels. A student will be ready to record these pieces when they are in "review mode" rather than newly learned. This way the student is up to the recording tempo and playing the piece with accuracy and ease and is therefore able to show musical intent with beautiful tone. This recording is then shared with your Suzuki violin faculty. It is then returned to the student and parents along with comments and a certificate of achievement.

We hope this Graduation project will:

Make review relevant -*we do not always realize the benefits of review until we do the work!*

Offer another opportunity for performance – *even though it is for a video camera or group class or home recital, it is a performance.*

Foster self-evaluation – *our goal is to give each student skills to eventually practice and learn independently. This begins with self-evaluation.*

Begin an organized collection of recordings - *to celebrate and benchmark progress from level to level.*

Uphold a high standard for each level – *as a group and individually.*

Recording Details: Please record your child's pieces when your teacher feels they are polished. You can upload the recording to either the Suzuki@NIU facebook page or to your teacher's email account.

Accompaniment: You may wish to record your child performing with piano accompaniment either from the Suzuki CD or live. The graduation performance can also be performed with violin accompaniment (Suzuki Duets or Marianne Rygner's or Marth Yasuda's books) or playing along with Smart Music. Playing unaccompanied is also acceptable so long as the tempo and rhythm is appropriate. Be sure the area in which you record is free of distractions. It is important that recording quality is as high as possible so that tone quality and dynamic range can be fully expressed. Please talk with your teacher if these recording methods are difficult for you.

Daily Listening to your recordings via CD and itunes (William Preucil/Linda Perry recommended) is imperative to sensitive tone, intonation and musicality. Listening and Playing along with a slightly slowed down recording through an app like "The Amazing Slow Downer" or "Tempo Slow" can make a world of difference!

Other Graduation Celebrations: We also recommend home recitals as part of a graduation to celebrate your child's accomplishments! This can be as simple as selecting a few favorite pieces from the book and playing them for family members or at your lesson to playing the entire book for the whole neighborhood! Performing is a great motivation for practicing and it allows others to celebrate your accomplishments with you. Students should design the invitations, program and menu to make it their own! Each graduate will be given the opportunity to perform a polished piece from the graduated book at group lesson as well.

Graduation levels

Twinkle Graduation

All Five Suzuki Variations and Theme of "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star."

Level I

Twinkle Variation of choice

O, Come Little Children

May Song

Allegro

Etude

Minuet II

Gavotte by Gossec

Level II

Chorus from "Judas Maccabeaus"

Hunter's Chorus

Long, Long Ago and variation

The Two Grenadiers or Witches' Dance

Gavotte from "Mignon" or Gavotte (Lully)

Minuet (Boccherini)

Level III

Gavotte in g minor (Bach)

Humoresque

Additional Book III piece

Bourree (Bach)

Level IV

Seitz Concerto movement of choice

Vivaldi Concerto movement of choice

Additional Book IV piece

Level V

Concerto- a min., 2nd mvt. or Concerto - g min. 2nd (Vivaldi)

Concerto for Two Violins by J.S. Bach

Additional Book V piece

Level VI

La Folia

Additional Book VI piece of choice

Level VII

Two contrasting mvts of a Handel Sonata (F, D or A Major)

Concerto in a minor, 1st or 3rd mvt.

Additional Book VII piece

Level VIII

Two contrasting mvts of the Sonata in g minor (Eccles)

Two contrasting mvts of the Sonata in d minor (Veracini)

Additional Book VIII piece

Level IX

1st mvt. of a Mozart Concerto (G, A or D Major)

plus cadenza

Level X

A major work decided upon by teacher and student