

MNjcc Suzuki Music Program 2020-2021

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the program prerequisite requirements?

1. Choose an instrument: violin, viola, cello. If you are not sure which instrument your child is interested in, you may find out in the observation process.
2. You must come observe with your child, at least 1 group lesson, and 2 private lessons. Observations help you and the teacher know whether your child is ready to start lessons. Observations also help parents begin to understand their role as a “home teacher.” For teachers’ private lesson schedules, and group lesson schedules, please contact: Gretchen Paxson Abberger (Artistic Director, MNjcc Suzuki Program) email: gretchena@mnjcc.org or phone: (647)-637-1530.
3. Read *Nurtured by Love* by Shinichi Suzuki and *Beyond The Music Lesson- Habits of Successful Suzuki Families* by Christine Goodner. Available in paperback and kindle (e-reader). For additional reading material check with your private teacher.
4. Start listening to the Volume I Suzuki CD of the pieces your child will be learning.
5. Think about whether or not your child is ready to start an instrument. Be aware of the time commitment for you, the parent as a “home teacher,” and practice time helper.
6. If you are not sure your child is quite ready and may not yet have the focus required to learn an instrument, you may wish to consider registering for Kate Shaner’s Suzuki Early Childhood Music class for infants – 4 years on Tuesdays from 10:30-11:00am. More information on this class is listed below under the course fees, and on the MNjcc website.
7. Attend one of our two Parent Information Evenings throughout the year, for new families: **Tuesday September 22, 2020 on Zoom, 7:00 – 8:00 pm** and **Tuesday February 16, 2021 on Zoom, 7:00 – 8:00 pm**. RSVP required. Email gretchena@mnjcc.org

What age should my child be in order to start lessons?

Most children start anywhere from age 3.5 - 7 years. However, there is really no age limitation with regards to being a beginner. Younger children need more parental guidance. Older children usually move more quickly through the repertoire.

How do I arrange a time/place to observe a private lesson?

Usually observations of private lessons will take place at the teacher’s private home. You may also be able to schedule some private lesson observations at the MNjcc or on Zoom, as some teachers are able to teach privates at the MNjcc if they can fit them in before or after their group-teaching schedule.

How do I select a private teacher?

During your observation times, you may have observed a teacher with whom you really “resonate” with, with whom you wish your child to study. Feel free to ask that particular teacher if they have an opening for your child in their studio. If so, please arrange your private

lesson time with that teacher. If you need names of other teachers because the teacher you want has a full studio, please contact Gretchen gretchena@mnjcc.org We try to accommodate families by location as well, but please don't choose a teacher because of location. Choose a teacher because you know that teacher is the one you want for your child.

How long are private lessons?

Most children take a 30-minute private lesson once a week until they reach late Book 2, at which point we recommend 45 minutes. From Book 5 through advanced, the suggested lesson time is 60 minutes.

How do I pay for private lessons?

You arrange your private lesson payment schedule with your private lesson teacher. Private lesson payments are made directly to the private teacher, and not to the MNjcc. Most teachers are accepting e-transfer. If you have arranged to have a private lesson at the MNjcc, there will be a facilities fee charge of \$210 per year (\$70.00 per term) which must be paid directly to the MNjcc along with your registration. *(Facilities fee not applicable for the 2020-2021 year as lessons will be virtual).*

How do I purchase or rent an instrument?

If your child is a beginner, please do not purchase or rent an instrument before you have spoken with your private teacher. (Violinists will not start on a "real instrument" until their private teacher says they are ready. The transition from a "pretend" instrument to a "real" instrument varies according to ability, age, and level). Families can arrange to rent instruments from various musical instrument stores in the Toronto area. The following is a list of stores where you can either purchase or rent an instrument:

- The Sound Post (416) 971-6990
- Long & McQuade (416) 588-7886
- Philip Davis, luthier (416) 466-9619
- Remenyi House of Music (416) 961- 3111
- There is usually a rental "with the option to buy," or a plan that is monthly and/or yearly. Parents of beginners should be prepared to rent a full-sized instrument for a short time (6 months to a year), in order to learn alongside their child.

What are Suzuki group repertoire classes?

Group classes are part of your child's Suzuki experience, and are not optional. Once your child has started private lessons, your teacher will tell you what level is best for your child, and advise you when, and what level to sign up for group lessons. All groups are put together according to the student's level of playing. Each child takes two weekly group classes on Tuesday: an instrumental group, plus one or two level appropriate enrichment class (composition, drumming, fiddling, chamber music ensemble, improvisation, music theory and note reading ensemble, singing, ukulele or yoga); group classes are assigned by the MNjcc Suzuki Director and faculty. Families will be able to select one to two enrichment classes per 10-week term. For Fall and Winter terms, group and enrichment classes are scheduled for 30 minutes as the classes will be taught virtually on Zoom. For the Spring term we will await

guidance from the Province of Ontario and the Senior Staff of the MNjcc as to when we will resume in person classes.

Descriptions of Enrichment Classes:

What is the rhythm, singing and parent training class? (Beginner and Twinkle Level)

The purpose of our rhythm, singing and parent training class is to help our beginner and twinkle level Suzuki families. In the class we will reinforce basic musical concepts such as singing, learning intervals and keeping a steady rhythm, in a fun and engaging group class setting. Parents and/or caregivers are required to attend and will have time to learn and discuss the Suzuki philosophy as well as setting up a successful home practice routine.

What is a chamber music ensemble? (Book 5 – adv. Students will be grouped by level)

Chamber music classes are for advanced students only working in book 5 or higher, who are accomplished note readers. Students will be placed into duo, trio, quartet, quintet, sextet, or octet ensembles according to age and playing level. The ensembles will study the classical through 21st century works by such composers as Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Dvorak, Britten, Barber, Hindemith, Glick, etc. If your child is a transfer student, and our staff is not sure of their level of playing, one of our chamber music teachers will ask them to play an audition

What are composition classes? (Book 2 – adv.)

This class, to be taught by Arie Van de Ven, will use the online site BandLab, focusing on improvisation as a compositional tool, and will include some games/activities that allow each student to generate their own music. Students will perform their own compositions for each other during class time, and if they are ready, at the end of term recitals.

What are drumming classes? (Book 1-3)

Pick a percussion “instrument” of your choice: small drum, pots or pans, a small bucket or tub, a hardcover book, or a cushion. Our teacher will introduce basic percussive patterns and phrases. He will teach students how to get used to playing these basic patterns at a set tempo. The class goal will be to create a percussive soundscape throughout each term.

What are fiddling classes? (Book 2 – 5. Students will be grouped by level)

Traditional fiddling is more than reading the music “off the page.” In fact, most “real” fiddle players don’t read a note, having learned their repertoire aurally. Of course, it’s an advantage to both be able to read music and learn by ear. The students in this class will be learning primarily by ear. Incorporating rhythm is another key aspect to great fiddle playing. Students will learn and explore Celtic, Irish, Canadian Old-Time and Traditional fiddle tunes. Students will learn arrangements of fiddle music and will have fun with ensemble skills. Classes will be determined according to Suzuki playing level.

What are improvisation classes? (Late Book 1-adv.)

“Creative **A**bility **D**evelopment” (CAD) is a method for developing uninhibited creativity in music performance. Through the improvisation games we play in CAD, each student is given the

freedom to discover their own musical ideas and style. Each child will discover their own musical voice. With self-discovery comes renewed feelings of self-confidence, freedom of expression, and a true connection with musical creativity.

What is a music theory and/or note reading ensemble? (Book 2 – adv. students will be grouped by level)

Most students start in a beginning note reading ensemble when they are almost finished with Suzuki repertoire book 1, and have begun a note reading routine in their private lesson. Note reading classes are divided by ability to read music notation. All students who participate in note reading classes must also practice note reading during the week, and as well, follow through in their private lessons. Most of the MNjcc Suzuki teachers teach with Joanne Martin's Can Read Music Vol. 1 & Vol. 2, and/or Carl Grissen's Learn with Tunes Vol. 1, 2, & 3, or something comparable. During 2020-21, students will be grouped by level. Students are usually in late book 4 and/or early book 5 when they have completed all levels of the note reading classes, at which point they are ready to join a chamber music group described above.

What is Pop and Online Skills for Strings? (Book 2 – adv.)

This class will be a hybrid of learning how to play alone and play together and will focus on mainstream music - learning popular songs by ear, mapping out forms, playing along to tracks and how to record (audio & video), multitrack (playing along with yourself) and for more advanced students learning to arrange songs for ensembles or apps like acapella & beyond. during the season, students will learn about: "feeling" rhythm in different ways, key signatures, stylistic bowing, chord structure and pop progressions, arranging, social media, performance skills on camera, and how to stay safe and protect yourself on the internet.

What are singing classes? (Book 1 – 5, grouped by age)

Highlights from many years of our summer camp have been performances by participants in our singing and musical theatre classes. As with a variety of other enrichment choices this 2020-21 season, we have decided to offer a singing class. It is such an integral skill in learning to play any instrument, as it enables one to understand many basic things about music making, tuning, basic music theory and beyond. Depending on demand, ability and level, we plan to divide the students by age (5-7), (8-11), (12 and up).

What are Ukulele classes? (Book 1 – 3. Students will be grouped by level)

Our program offers beginner – intermediate ukulele classes, usually to our younger students not yet ready to participate in a note-reading ensemble. These students will have had at least one or more seasons of musicianship classes. Our ukulele teachers teach melody, harmony, and rhythm by ear much as we do in our Suzuki lessons. They reinforce the concepts of the Suzuki method by applying them on a new instrument, while incorporating self-accompaniment. The ukulele is an ideal instrument for all musicians, and one can achieve a lot very quickly. Singing is also an important part of learning to play the ukulele, and self-accompaniment is extremely satisfying. In class students work on singing, and learn to play ukulele while singing at the same time.

What are yoga classes? (open to all, including parents)

We have normally run yoga only during our camp week, and have realized, especially during this time of massive online learning that we would all benefit from a moment of physical stillness and gentle focus. Our teacher will introduce a mixture of Yoga postures appropriate for the fitness level of all participants. Her classes will focus on helping students of any age and playing level to develop and enhance coordination, flexibility, balance and strength for playing their instrument and/or doing everyday activities. Students will not need their instruments for this class nor will prior instruction in Yoga be required.

When & where are group classes/enrichment classes/recitals?

The group classes, enrichment classes and recitals are on Tuesday afternoons 4:00 pm through early evening. During the 2020-21 fall and winter terms, our program will take place virtually on Zoom. Once it is safe to do so, we will resume in-person classes at the MNjcc using rooms on floors 1, 2, 3, and 4. We schedule **solo recitals once per term, which will be held on Zoom in 2020-21. On recital days, regularly scheduled group classes do not take place.**

How do I pay for group classes & how much are they?

Payment for group class registration is divided into three terms, and processed by pre-authorized payment from a VISA or MasterCard, or debit from a cheque account. Group class payment is through the MNjcc, and is separate from the private lesson payment.

For a Tuesday Suzuki group class registration contact:

Gretchen Paxson – Abberger Artistic Director, MNjcc Suzuki Program: gretchena@mnjcc.org or (647) 637-1530

Course Fees (per year – patrons/MNjcc members) – Includes a weekly repertoire group, and one or two enrichment classes, both on Tuesdays: \$795 (\$265 per term). Please register online.

- **Beginner Cello/Enrichment \$795 (\$265 per term)**
- **Cello Bk. I/Enrichment \$795 (\$265 per term)**
- **Cello Bk. II/Enrichment \$795 (\$265 per term)**
- **Cello Bk. III - VI/Enrichment \$795 (\$265 per term)**
- **Beginner Violin/Enrichment \$795 (\$265 per term)**
- **Twinkle Violin/Enrichment \$795 (\$265 per term)**
- **Violin Bk. I/Enrichment \$795 (\$265 per term)**
- **Violin Bk. II/Enrichment \$795 (\$265 per term)**
- **Violin Bk. III/Enrichment \$795 (\$265 per term)**
- **Violin Bk. IV/Enrichment \$795 (\$265 per term)**
- **Violin Bk. V/Enrichment \$795 (\$265 per term)**
- **Violin Bk. VI/Enrichment \$795 (\$265 per term)**
- **Violin Bk. VII/Enrichment \$795 (\$265 per term)**
- **Violin Bk. VIII/Enrichment \$795 (\$265 per term)**
- **Chamber Music/Enrichment \$795 (\$265 per term)**

- **Additional (Third) Enrichment Class: composition, drumming, fiddling, chamber music ensemble, improvisation, music theory, note reading ensemble, pop and online skills for strings, singing, ukulele or yoga \$495 (\$165 per term)**
- **Discount for families registering more than 1 child** - please deduct \$15.00 per term for each extra child.

Adult Mixed String Group Class: (Please register online)

- **Intermediate** Adult Mixed String Group Class \$540 (\$180 per term) on Wednesday evenings.

Adult Fiddle Class: (Please register online)

- \$540 (\$180 per term) on Thursday evenings.

Suzuki Early Childhood Music Classes: (Please register online)

- **Suzuki Early Childhood Music classes with Kate Shaner** 30 minutes of music and movement. Incorporating Kate's extensive Suzuki Early Childhood training and passions for creativity with children and music. Parent/caregiver participation is required. Previous music class experience not required. Infant to 4 years old. Tuesdays: 10:30-11:00am on Zoom
- **Free Trial Class: Sept 22, 2020 on Zoom. Sign-up Required.**
- **Fee:** \$150 per term. **Info:** email: gretchena@mnjcc.org

Suzuki Music & Arts Camp

July 5-9, 2021. Brochures available late January 2021. For more information please check our website, or email gretchena@mnjcc.org

Jump Start to Twinkles Camp for Beginners

August 23-27, 2021. Brochures available late January 2021. For more information please check our website, or email gretchena@mnjcc.org

Are there any other Suzuki fees?

1. JCC Suzuki Parent Association fee of \$25 per family per year - an annual fee used to subsidize special events, guest accompanists, masterclass teachers, guest performing artists and purchase of equipment, and rental of concert spaces.
2. Registration fee of \$25 per family per year (**Reduced from \$50 for the 2020-2021 year**).
3. Theory expenses - all students enrolled in Theory Classes will be responsible for the costs of books (estimated - under \$25.00 per year).
4. Private Lessons Facilities Fee \$210.00 per year. (Applicable only for students taking private lessons at the MNjcc). (**Facilities fee not applicable for the 2020-2021 year as lessons will be virtual**).

5. Capital Improvement Fee - There is a 3% Capital Improvement Fee on all programs and services (not subject to HST). This fee assists in the cost of much needed capital improvements to our facility. Above-mentioned fees are due with the first term's class fees, as indicated on the registration form.

What if my child is transferring from another Suzuki Program or already has Suzuki experience?

If you are not sure what class level your child fits into, he/she can come and "try out" 2 classes before registering. You can also come and observe classes with your child, to get an idea of the level and pace for your child. If you need to find a new private teacher for your child, it would be best to observe private lessons of several teachers to find the teacher that best suits your child's needs.

Special Needs:

We want everyone to experience the joy of music. Please contact Suzuki Artistic Director Gretchen Paxson-Abberger at 647-637-1530 or email gretchena@mnjcc.org to discuss how we can best accommodate your child.

Music Scholarship Innovation Fund

This fund helps make innovative and dynamic music programs accessible to everyone, regardless of financial status or circumstances. There is availability for financial assistance towards our regular Suzuki year-round program and for our summer music camp tuition. If your family's finances have been affected during this COVID-19 time, please don't hesitate to reach out. All applications are kept confidential. To apply for a music scholarship, contact Wendy Moss at wendym@mnjcc.org. If you would like to make a donation to this fund to help support members of our Suzuki community, please click here to make a tax-deductible donation to the [Music Scholarship Fund](#).

When & where can I meet the teachers and get more info?

We will hold two Parent Information Evenings throughout the year, for new and inquiring families. **Please RSVP online or** gretchena@mnjcc.org

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- Tuesday September 22, 2020 on Zoom, 7:00 – 8:00 pm
- Tuesday February 16, 2021 on Zoom 7:00 – 8:00 pm

At these evenings, we will present an overview of our program, and a brief synopsis about learning by the Suzuki method. Several teachers will be available to answer your questions. All are welcome. Please let us know you're coming by confirm with Gretchen:

gretchena@mnjcc.org