



AMS Program Director Mandy Guilfoyle interviews Suzuki Camp and Fiddle Camp teacher Paul Stroebel

MG: Tell us about yourself! Where are you from? Where did you go to school?

PS: I am originally from Augusta, GA. I went to Davidson Fine Arts School there and UNCA for college, during which I started crafting my music career here in Asheville & have not had a reason to leave since!

How old were you when you started playing your instrument?

Three, almost four years old.

What is your most memorable experience as a Suzuki student when you were just starting out?

Going to a Suzuki institute. With various scheduled classes & different teachers, it was very different from my typical private lessons.

What is your favorite Suzuki piece to play or teach?

Bach Double concerto, because we are without a doubt playing serious music and frequently using new skills like shifting, bow management, and playing chamber music, while the basics like finger patterns & keeping fingers down that we've been doing since Twinkle have never been more important.

What is your favorite fiddle song to play?

Emily's Reel by Mark O'Connor, because it has a great lilt & was a gift to Yo-yo Ma, named for his daughter.

How would you advise a young student who wants to start playing the fiddle? What is the first step?

Keep your fingers as close to the strings as possible, and it doesn't get any closer than leaving them down when you can, and related, ask yourself how early you can get or have fingers ready.

Tell us about your interest in Harry Potter! How did it start?

I was in late middle school when Harry Potter came out, so I didn't get into it because I thought it was kid-stuff & I was too old for that. I regret that decision, because there was at least one cute girl who was into it. I was pleasantly surprised by how much I liked it when I started reading the books a few years ago for this camp.

Give us your best viola joke:

Kind of a situational rather than verbal joke: when I am at a rehearsal and looking for a door-stop to prop open a door, "Where's a viola when you need one?"

What piece of advice would you give to a young musician wanting to play music professionally?

It can absolutely be done, and everyone has their own way or path to piece it together. Not everyone is a teacher, professor, sound engineer, orchestra musician, etc. Explore what you are good at, what you are really good at, what you enjoy doing, and what is in demand.

If you're not from Asheville, what brought you here?

The music department at UNCA.

What do you prefer to play: classical or folk music?

String quartets are my favorite thing to play.