



**Welcome to the latest edition of the ISA Journal. We're pleased to bring you articles and photos about Talent Education activities from around the globe.**

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This issue of the ISA Journal brings news of concerts and celebrations from all our constituent regions. It is heartening to see such continuing activity with the advent of further devastating conflict around the world. This Journal issue also features reports on the 3rd International Suzuki Teacher Trainers Convention by Suzuki trainers from a variety of instrument areas, regions, and perspectives on the important topics of discussion. More than 100 trainers from all instrument areas and all five Regional Associations spent an exciting and inspirational 3 days focused on the future of the Suzuki movement into the 21st Century, culminating in a memorable visit by the entire Convention participants to Dr. Suzuki's house museum and the gravesite in honor of his 125th birthday on October 17. It was a moment of reflection, inspiration, and dedication for everyone.

We wish a Happy New Year - solar and lunar - to all our Suzuki colleagues and families for 2024.  
Allen Lieb Jr., CEO/ISA

Visit the ISA website at [InternationalSuzuki.org](https://www.internationalsuzuki.org) for up-to-date news from each Instrument Committee, important announcements, and events from Regional Associations, and read past editions of the ISA Journal dating from 1983.

Visit and like the ISA Facebook page for important announcements about Suzuki events across our Association and the latest developments in all the instrument areas: <https://www.facebook.com/InternationalSuzukiAssociation>

Visit and join the ISA Facebook [SUZUKI™ Teachers](https://www.facebook.com/SUZUKI-Teachers) page for postings, discussions, and questions from Suzuki teachers around the globe.



# A Message from Carolyn Kleiner Cheng



A Message From Ms. Cheng:

*It is quite an honor for me to be the newly designated representative of the Asia Region Suzuki Association at the ISA Board. I am quite excited to meet new colleagues and to discover a new view of the Suzuki movement from an international perspective, a taste which I received at the recently concluded Teacher Trainers' Conference in Matsumoto in October. I hope to create international linkages and connections and work through the problems and issues present that will enable teachers to joyfully continue their work of bringing music to children and their families.*

Carolyn Kleiner Cheng holds a Bachelor's degree in Piano from the University of the Philippines, *summa cum laude*, and a Master's degree in Piano with distinction from the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, Massachusetts. A prizewinner in the Manila Symphony Orchestra Young Artists' Competitions, she has played with the National Philharmonic Orchestra, the Manila Symphony Orchestra and in solo recitals.

A retired faculty member of the University of the Philippines (U.P.) College of Music, Carolyn received training in the Suzuki Method from Prof. Carmencita Arambulo and has been teaching it since the 1980's at Greenhills Music Studio and the U.P. Extension Program. She has had several prize winners in the yearly competitions of the Piano Teachers' Guild of the Philippines as well as in the National Music Competition for Young Artists. She is presently President of the Philippine Suzuki Association and has just been designated ARSA piano teacher trainer.

## Philippine Suzuki Association Hosts National Camp



The students' camp was held July 4-7, 2023, face-to-face for the first time since the pandemic. Teacher workshops, and a parent talk were held on July 3, then a faculty concert on July 4. The camp gave the students many opportunities to come back and play together in group classes, master classes, and classes in musicianship, improvisation, ensemble playing, and chamber music.





## Thailand Association of Talent Education Strings Camp

TATE's 3 day Strings Camp was held on Aug 12-14 at Princess Galyani Vadhana Institute of Music (PGVIM). Our camp consists of Violin, Viola, and Cello group classes and masterclasses. There are 3 different level of ensemble groups, and we were very pleased to have a gigantic group of cellos this year as well as an expanding group of viola students that participated. TATE would like to thank all of the previous faculty members that has been with our camp and express lots of gratitude for our visiting faculty. Great job to all of the students. Bravo!



## Taiwan Talent Education Association Graduate Concerts

In July, TTEA held the two graduate concerts in Taipei City to celebrate and encourage students and families to keep their good work. Students were motivated after the events while parents also had deeper insights to go for the next step.





# Latvian Suzuki Association celebrates 10th Anniversary

Sallija Bankevica, Chair LvSA

The dream to bring the SUZUKI™ Method to Latvia has come true! From 4 Piano teachers and a small number of families at the start, the Latvian Suzuki Association (LvSA) has grown to 14 teachers (8 Pianos, 2 Violins, 3 Cellos, 1 Contrabass) and more than 150 kids!

Piano teachers Kristine Rāviņa and Tamāra Gžibovska brought the SUZUKI™ Method to our country 15 years ago and they founded LvSA to ensure the development of the SUZUKI™ Method in Latvia.



Step by step, we have built our association by strengthening the Suzuki Community through the first Graduation Concerts, National Workshops, Teachers Training Courses and many other events.

We are deeply grateful to our wonderful Teachers Trainers - Mary McCarthy (Piano), Koen Rens (Violin) and Anja Maja (Violoncello)- who help us to grow and develop the Suzuki spirit in Latvia.

LvSA organized 3 concerts to celebrate this wonderful event. We were really happy to get Koen Rens and friends from Lithuania to play with us in the Charity Concert at St. Peter's Church in Riga on 30 April 2023.



Inspired by the British Suzuki Gala Concert in the Royal Albert Hall, we created our 'Latvian Suzuki Gala'. It took place in the main concert hall of our capital city Riga on 4 June 2023 and brought together on the one stage all Latvian Suzuki students and teachers.



It was a great pleasure to listen groups of Pianos, Violins, Cellos, and Contrabasses play repertoire from the Suzuki Books as well as other special pieces.

Of course, the finale of this concert was a performance by everyone playing a special arrangement of 'Twinkle' by our Piano teacher Ilze Poke written for the concert.

We hope to continue our journey through this wonderful Suzuki world. Wish us good luck!

# The Viola Blooms in Mexico

## A Review of the First Suzuki Viola Festival of Mexico

Carlos Guadarrama

From July 17 to 23, violists, teachers, students, and families gathered for the First Suzuki Viola Festival of Mexico. Violist Patricia Oropeza and I collaborated to carry out, for the very first time in Mexico (and perhaps in Latin America), a festival dedicated exclusively to the Suzuki world of the viola. The festival included a Suzuki course for teachers, concerts, lectures, workshops, master classes, group classes, and a viola ensemble comprised of all the participating violists. The week-long event was housed in the facilities of the Conservatory of Music of the State of Mexico, located in the city of Toluca (State of Mexico). The beautiful Laszlo Frater Concert Hall was the venue for the concerts and lectures. I would like to thank Luis Manuel Garcia Peña, director of the conservatory, for all the support provided to carry out the festival.



The festival began on Monday with the Viola Suzuki Book One (online) course, taught by teacher trainer Elizabeth Stuen-Walker. It was an auspicious morning, as ten Mexican teachers officially began their training in Suzuki viola! Teachers from Mexico City, the State of Mexico, Querétaro, San Luis Potosí, Hidalgo, Coahuila, and Sinaloa are the first generation of Suzuki viola teachers in the country. For most of the teachers, it was their first Suzuki course, where they saw for the first time initial viola classes for children who usually start with violin. The course was taught in English over seven intense days in which I helped as an official translator.

On Wednesday, the in-person activities of the festival began. Patricia Oropeza, director of Crescendo Suzuki Estudio, and I inaugurated the occasion with a wonderful concert with young viola students. This welcome concert included pieces from the early Suzuki books and works for viola ensemble, during which I had the opportunity to play with the excellent young violists. The accompanying pianist was David Gonzalez. As the festival was recognized by the Mexican Association of the Suzuki Method (AMMS), Araceli Lugo Oliva, president of the AMMS, gave a welcome message to all attendees.

This day also marked the beginning of the master classes, which were taught by both Patricia Oropeza and myself for all of the students participating in the festival. It was wonderful to work with kids who not only like to play the viola but enjoy playing for their friends and family. Each student was very well prepared for their lesson, either playing from memory or reading (alto clef) perfectly. Master classes—and group classes given by Patricia—were held every day. To conclude the day, Olimpia Martinez conducted the first rehearsal of the Viola Ensemble.

The Festival featured many engaging lectures. The renowned Mexican luthier Erick Ivan Diaz provided revelatory insights about current luthiery, giving an important sample of his successful international career. Additionally, he gave several tips for parents and students on the care and maintenance of instruments and bows. In another lecture, the physiotherapist and guitarist Manuel Villalobos shared ideas on the prevention of injuries in violists. Villalobos explained: “Music is a demanding activity both physically and mentally. A violist puts in arduous hours of daily practice to develop his technique and his sound, thus achieving expressive performances that take years of discipline. In this process, forced postures, excessive repetitions, and accumulation of tension may be present, which in some cases trigger musculoskeletal discomfort related to musical practice.” He outlined the main tools for body care in violists including exercises before and after playing, the implementation of breaks, posture care, and ergonomic recommendations. All of the above help to generate a culture of self-care, healthy musical careers, and improved performance on the instrument.



No viola festival would be complete without performances—and we were lucky to showcase leading Mexican performers throughout the week. Friday featured a virtual performance by two string quartets: La Catrina String Quartet (including violist Jorge Martínez-Ríos), and my string quartet, the Marketo String Quartet. We both performed works in which the viola plays a significant role.

The concert began with La Catrina String Quartet's performance of Mozart's String Quartet in G major, K. 387. The children were surprised when I told them that Mozart sometimes played viola in a quartet (along with Haydn and Dittersdorf on violins and Vanhal on cello), and that he most likely enjoyed playing the viola very much. Next, the Marketo String Quartet presented two quartets: Ludwig van Beethoven's op. 18, no. 4, and Antonín Dvořák's op. 96 ("American"). In the same way, the attendees were very excited when I told them that Beethoven and Dvořák also played viola! While neither of the composers wrote a viola concerto, their chamber and symphonic works make it clear that they loved our instrument. To conclude the virtual concert, I channeled the joy, creativity, and fun that I associate with the Suzuki Method by presenting a video with my quartet playing a Disney Medley (my arrangement), which I think everyone loved!



On Saturday, the penultimate day of activities, in addition to the respective master classes, group classes, and ensemble rehearsal, Patricia Oropeza gave the Effective Practice Workshop. This workshop was for parents only, with the purpose of giving advice and strategies that help with the not-so-easy task of practicing daily. The Effective Practice Workshop was a space where the parents engaged in reflective and collaborative exercises. They were invited to comment on their experiences and the family dynamics involved in having a child studying the viola in the Suzuki Method. As is well known, the role of the parent is very important since they are primarily responsible for creating a favorable environment, a decisive factor for the child to remain open and motivated to learn the instrument. The workshop covered the characteristics of designing a healthy practice session by carefully considering the preparation, duration, development, and conclusion of practice sessions, all with the intent of creating a positive and productive environment that motivates children to practice. Oropeza commented that "the response from the parents was very favorable, they shared the way in which the daily practice is carried out; and they were participatory, open to dialogue, and receptive to the suggestions that were proposed."

Sunday, the final day of the festival, began with the dress rehearsal for the closing concert with the participation of the pianist Yahré Fernández. This was followed by the morning concert that featured violist Leslie Taborda who, together with Patricia, Olimpia, and myself, performed the Jupiter Theme from *The Planets* by Gustav Holst, arranged for four violas by Elizabeth Stuen-Walker. All the participating students performed a piece individually, giving samples of what they had learned in their master classes. Finally, the Viola Ensemble, directed by Olimpia Martínez, closed this fun and emotional concert with an interesting arrangement combining the songs "Long, Long Ago" and "Let It Be" (Bayly and Beatles) and a fun version for viola ensemble of *Fiesta Rumba* by Del Elliott.

In the afternoon the Book One course ended. Teacher trainer Elizabeth Stuen-Walker encouraged and motivated us to continue our constant preparation as musicians and teachers. By the way, Betsy and I are already planning the Book Two course!

As the co-founder of this first viola festival, I can say this project has taught me a lot. Administrative and logistical work are a challenge in themselves, and being a musician and teacher, the challenge is double because I don't do that type of work often. However, after having done this first festival, I am sure that the next one will be more enjoyable. I relished and learned a lot teaching the young and talented violists, who are already thinking about the repertoire for the next festival. Without a doubt, this course (and festival) has been very enriching, and the entire Suzuki community in Mexico will remember it for being the first viola course offered in the country.

*The author would like to thank Patricia Oropeza for her contributions to this article.*

**Patricia Oropeza** has a bachelor's degree in viola performance and a master's degree in neuroscience and education and recently completed her master's degree in musical pedagogy, both from the International University of La Rioja. She has trained in Suzuki methodology with Caroline Fraser, Nancy Lokken, Fernando Piñeiro, Eduardo Ludueña, Marilyn O'Boyle, Allen Lieb, Daniel Gee, Rolando Freitag, April Losey, Julia Hardie, Cathryn Lee, Sarah Montzka, Elizabeth Stuen-Walker, and Mark Mutter. Since 1995 she has taught at the Conservatory of Music of the State of Mexico. In 2016, she started the Children's Viola Program at the Children's Musical Initiation Center of the same institution. After several years of gaining experience as a teacher in Suzuki Methodology, he founded Crescendo Suzuki Estudio where she teaches violin and viola.



**Carlos Guadarrama** is the principal violist of the Orquesta Sinfonica Sinaloa de las Artes and a founding member of the Marketo String Quartet. He studied with Matthew Schubring, Mikhail Tolpygo, and Maria Vdovina. He earned his master's degree in music from Carnegie Mellon University (viola performance) with professors Atar Arad and Toby Appel. Since 1996, he has been a member of the Orquesta Sinfonica de Mineria. Since 2016, he has been a teacher at the School of Music of the Instituto Chapultepec Norte (Culiacán, Sinaloa), teaching the Suzuki method for viola, violin, and piano. In 2023, he obtained the Certificate of Achievement Level One (Viola), a recognition granted by the SSA to teachers committed to lifelong learning, demonstrating his commitment to excellence as a teacher, thus contributing to the growth and professionalism of Suzuki education in the Americas.



# Installation of Nameplate at the Birthplace of the Suzuki Method

On Sunday, November 19, eleven children from the Matsumoto Branch performed Concerto in A Minor (Vivaldi), Hunters' Chorus (Weber), and Minuet (Bach) in front of Ryugo Hayano, TERI President, and members of the neighborhood association at a ceremony celebrating the installation of a new plaque at the birthplace of the Suzuki Method on the right side of "Hashigo-Yokocho" (Ladder Alley) in Oote, Matsumoto City.



Under a clear blue sky, the energetic violin sounds of children echoed in the birthplace of the Suzuki Method.

The plaque was installed at this site in mid-October in conjunction with the International Teachers' Training Conference, so that Suzuki teachers who came from abroad could see the plaque and be deeply moved by the thought. (Left: The nameplate installed. Right: Ruth Miura from Barcelona, who visited this site)





# Special Section:

Reports from the Third International  
Teacher Trainer Convention.

スズキ・メソード  
音楽教室

鈴木鎮一が70年以上前に提唱した母語教育法 スズキ・メソード  
～言葉を身につけるように～

**THE 3RD INTERNATIONAL  
SUZUKI TEACHER  
TRAINERS  
CONVENTION2023 IN  
MATSUMOTO**



# One Size Does Not Fit All

Anke van der Bijl, Chair ESA

From 13 to 15 October 2023, teacher trainers from the entire globe gathered in Matsumoto to commemorate Dr. Suzuki's 125th birthday and to discuss two important topics:

- An International Credential System
- An International Graduation System



## International Credential System

The SUZUKI™ Method is a global method. People move from one region to another (and sometimes back again). In order to continue their work as Suzuki Teachers, it is necessary to have their credentials recognised in the new region.

Teacher Training systems vary widely, across the five regions - from short term book courses without any form of assessment, to recognition as Suzuki Teacher only when a candidate has graduated in all repertoire for the chosen Suzuki instrument.

Since the pandemic, people have discovered online training. Remote training via the internet has had a tremendous impact on the nature of Teacher Training. ISA has made a statement about Online Training Courses - "In-person individual approaches to training and mentoring teachers are foundation to the Suzuki Method and are an essential component in Suzuki Teacher Development. ISA recognizes that online teacher training may be an appropriate option in certain circumstances."

ESA, therefore decided that at least 50 % of any Teacher Training Course needs to be in person. It is hoped that frequent communication via email and knowledge of the ESA Manuals will ensure that all Teacher Trainers and Teachers will be aware of these regulations.

The Convention topic "International Credentials" seeks to define what these changes mean for the Teacher Training systems now and in the future.

## International Graduation System

All regions presented their current form of Graduation. In PPSA, a uniform system is in place, based on a no failure for each pupil. Pupils enter Graduation only when they are ready. Success is celebrated during a Graduation Concert in the Sydney Opera House. ARSA has Graduation systems in Hong Kong, Singapore, Indonesia, Taiwan, Philippines, Korea, and Thailand with slight variations between the countries. Technical exercises and local songs are sometimes added to the core Graduation repertoire. In SAA, different Graduation systems are in place, varying to suit the circumstances - i.e. sometimes the geographical distance calls for a different approach. In TERI, the Graduation system is well established and has been in place for decades. In preparation for this convention, a survey was conducted amongst all Japanese Suzuki Teachers. 96.8 % were very happy with the current Graduation system. In 2022, 3358 Japanese pupils graduated. As for our own region: Several countries have a system in place. Sometimes technical exercises such as scales and arpeggios are required. To stress the importance of Graduation system, the Conference Organising Committee distributed a hard copy booklet with the Graduation chapters of the Manga Story of Shinichi Suzuki.

## Fears

I recently read that fear brings people into action, usually until a sense of security is reestablished. In other words, fear brings people temporarily into action. Whereas desire can change our behavior permanently. Compare it to the carrot and the stick.

Regions can fear that an International Credential System or a uniform Teacher Training system will affect the

quality of their Teacher Training, or fear that the number of participants and potential teacher members of the association will decline.

In regard to an International Graduation System, teachers sometimes fear evaluation of their student's graduation tapes by other Teacher Trainers. The British Suzuki Music Association even offer a CPD Course dealing specifically with formulating graduation evaluations in a respectful way.

### Desires

In spite of any fears, all regions have the desire to respect each other's credentials. A first step will be the posting of all reciprocity systems on the ISA website. Thus, every teacher can clearly see what is required when moving to a different region which might help them to feel more welcome in their new environment. More discussion is needed, but there is mutual desire amongst regions to find a system to recognize each other's training.

All regions agree that Graduation is a very powerful tool to motivate our students and unite our teachers and trainers even if systems differ. As a first step here, it was decided to start with one uniform certificate/sticker for Twinkle Graduations. A first draft of this TwinkRing (Twinkle + Ringing tone) design was presented at the end of the conference.

Belgium was a country where, until now, it was felt there was no need for a Graduation system. However, at one of the convention dinners, Belgian Teacher Trainers could be seen to be involved in lively discussions on how to implement a Graduation system in their National Suzuki Association where all Teacher Trainers could be included.

The conclusion of discussions on both topics of this convention? One size does not fit all. However, where fear is transformed into desire, much can be accomplished!

**Anke van der Bijl** is Chair of the European Suzuki Association, the ESA representative to the ISA Board, Chair of the ISA Flute Committee, a registered Suzuki Flute Teacher Trainer in the ESA, and an active performer and Suzuki flute teacher residing in Gouda, Netherlands.



## A Canadian in Matsumoto

Kathleen Schoen

Impressions from the International Suzuki Teacher Trainer's Conference  
Matsumoto, October 2023

Ever since I started Suzuki Teacher training (over 20 years ago!), I kept hearing about the Talent Education Research Institute in Matsumoto, the school founded by Shinichi Suzuki. Everyone who had been there said it was a wonderful experience it was to go there and study with Suzuki sensei and the other Japanese master teachers, at a school that was completely immersed in the implementation of his philosophy. So I was very excited when the the opportunity came to attend the International Suzuki Teacher Trainers Conference in Matsumoto!

The first thing I did after arriving in Matsumoto, was to make a pilgrimage to the Shinichi Suzuki Memorial Hall, his former house which is now a museum. I sat in the room where he taught his students, and in his office where he listened to all of the graduation recordings, and thought about the origins of the Suzuki movement. Suzuki's goal was not to train professional musicians, but to develop character through the study of music. Developing the skill of self-expression by playing a musical instrument developed other fine personal qualities that Suzuki termed a "noble spirit". The approach



that he developed to foster this goal also enables students to develop very high level of ability at a young age. Sometimes, the striving for this high level of playing becomes the primary focus and overshadows the original goal of character development.

So now I was ready to attend the conference. The main topics of discussion were:

- International equivalency of training credentials
- The importance of the beginning stages for a young student
- Graduation protocols

The graduation discussions were the most inspiring. We had the opportunity to hear Suzuki's own recorded comments from former student's graduation recordings, which are archived at the Talent Education Research Institute. All his comments to the students were about the nobility of character, kindness, respect, and love that he could perceive through their playing. Any technical issues about any student's playing were addressed to their teacher, not to the student. There was also discussion about how graduation recordings and events were handled by different Suzuki organizations around the world. So many different ways to inspire and encourage students to set goals and celebrate success! I came home inspired to revise my own studio and program graduation to meet the needs of the students in my community in a more flexible manner.

The discussions about the foundations of the Suzuki philosophy, especially in starting students at the youngest possible age, were not as clearly focussed as the graduation discussion. I learned that the implementation of the Suzuki Early Childhood Education program was not as uniform between countries as the approach to instrumental instruction. Interesting questions came up regarding the cultural relevance of the curriculum, and age-appropriate activities for both early childhood and early instrument instruction. What impressed me about these discussions was how everyone wanted to know more about what everyone else was doing, so they could have more resources to do what is best for the children. I returned home with a sheaf of new resource material and many creative ideas for implementation. I think that as long as the teachers keep the needs of the children first, and keep the foundational tenets of the Suzuki philosophy in their work, variations in approach can only enrich our global community.

When it came to discussing the potential creation of an internationally accepted standard of teacher training, that is when I learned the importance of good communication. There were lots of good intentions, but not everyone had the same experience or information. Presentations were made about the training programs in different regions before the discussions began, but each region presented slightly different information, so the people who did not have direct experience with working in different regions (European Suzuki Association (ESA), Suzuki Association of the Americas (SAA), Pan Pacific Suzuki Association (PPSA), etc.) were still unclear on the differences in training programs between regions. So most of the discussions I participated in were filling in gaps in knowledge, rather than actually comparing systems and looking for differences and commonalities. There was a resolution passed at the conference to make sure that the lines of communication would be more open on this issue, especially for teachers who move between regions, so everyone knows what training will be accepted and what training will have to be added in the system that they are moving into.

I realized, as people were exchanging information and filling in the blanks for each other, that most of the training systems cover the same material, just packaged into different course formats. The big difference is in the entry requirements for the teachers. It ranged from needing a music degree and an audition of upper-level material to begin (ESA) to taking the course with no prerequisite but playing an exit exam to show understanding of the material (SAA - Latin America). So, I wonder to myself, what is the best way of helping teachers realize the benefits of implementing the Suzuki philosophy in their teaching, so that the maximum number of students can have the opportunity to develop their character and their musical ability? This is the question I took back to my fellow Suzuki Recorder teacher trainers. Our group of ESA and SAA registered teacher trainers are looking at ways we could potentially use the flexibility of our smaller community to merge training systems.

As a flute, recorder, and Suzuki Early Childhood teacher, I appreciate being part of a smaller community. Most of the teachers and trainers know each other, and I have witnessed many innovative and flexible collaborations and solutions in small classes at Institutes and Conferences. But at the end of the conference, when you find yourself in a small room in the basement with the guitar, double bass, harp, and trumpet people, you wonder if there is a way to make the instruments with smaller student and teacher populations feel that their ideas are valued as much as the violins, cellos, and pianos.

The recorder teachers performed for the Talent Education Research Institute event that followed the conference, to demonstrate an instrument that was not part of the TERI offerings. Some of the European teachers who were there asked why there were not more recorder teachers and students? But the ESA presentation during the teacher trainer discussions stated that they were aiming for quality over quantity. So this took me back to my thoughts when I was sitting in Suzuki sensei's living room, now a museum honouring his humanitarian goal of developing noble hearts through music. If all of us in the Suzuki community are all striving to develop noble hearts, do we need to segregate ourselves into geographic or instrument specific groups? Is there a way that we can promote and strengthen our mutual commitment to the Suzuki philosophy, and still be flexible to accommodate the variety of needs that are unique to the instruments we play and the countries where we work? I do not have an answer to this question, but I do know that continuing the conversation, both on-line and in person at more international conferences will lead to more collaboration. I am hoping to be at the next one and be part of this work.

**Kathleen Schoen** has been teaching both flute and recorder since receiving her B.Mus degree from UBC in 1984. After beginning her Suzuki method training in 1997, she founded the Edmonton Suzuki Flute and Recorder Society in 2007 to meet the increased demand for Suzuki method instruction on those instruments and became a Teacher Trainer for recorder in 2013. She is active in the Suzuki community both locally and internationally, as an Institute Director, Conference Coordinator, teacher, teacher trainer, and program administrator, and is the first Canadian flute teacher to receive the Certificate of Achievement from the SAA. She is also a sessional instructor in flute and recorder at the University of Alberta, Augustana campus. A performer on flute, baroque flute, and recorder, she works both as a soloist and with her chamber music group, the Schoen Duo. A Suzuki parent as well as a teacher, her daughter started in the Suzuki program at the age of 2 and is now also a trained Suzuki teacher.



# Suzuki as an Adjective

Nancy Modell

After 47 years of involvement with the Suzuki Approach as a teacher, attending the ISA and TERI Conferences was the perfect reason to *finally* make my long-overdue visit to Japan. Prior to the start of the Conferences, my husband and I toured this beautiful country. Being exposed to Japanese culture for almost three weeks made it clear to me how much the Suzuki Approach is rooted in Japanese culture and in the way people in Japan interact with one another.

In my Suzuki lessons over the years, I treated the opening bow as a sign of readiness—that the student is ready to learn. In addition, I've always felt that bowing at the start and end of a lesson was a sign of respect between the student and teacher, evening out the playing field, like when Dr. Suzuki would always find a way to be at eye level with the student. In Japan, I discovered that bowing is a form of greeting, and is prevalent everywhere in Japan—with everyone in every walk of life. Even strangers on the street would introduce themselves to us with a bow. These experiences enriched my understanding of bowing in a Suzuki music lesson: it is a sign of being truly seen.

In Japan, there was a lot of attention to detail in many facets of life that made everything seamless and extraordinarily comfortable. My husband and I would often remark, “Wow, they thought of everything—even *that!*” I have always been amazed at the level of detail and thought behind the sequencing of the Suzuki repertoire selections. In addition, when training to become a Suzuki teacher, there is great attention paid to the details and the minutia of every aspect of learning so that every student can find their way, in comfort, to be successful. This is one of the distinguishing factors of Suzuki learning and is clearly inspired by how the Japanese approach life.

Of all my experiences in Japan, the one thing that stands out above all others is the people. Throughout our entire trip, we saw kindness and graciousness in our interactions with everyone we encountered. Every person we met was “Suzuki.” I had expected a Suzuki atmosphere at the Conferences, with my “music people,” but I found that same level of warmth and virtuousness in the people I met prior to reaching Matsumoto. It was wonderful—and although it shouldn't have been unexpected, I was still surprised and amazed that the environment we experienced in Japan was “Suzuki” in every way.

My short time in Japan gave me a fresh understanding of how the Suzuki philosophy and approach came to be, and developed within Japan's culture of respect, attention to detail, and kindness. One needn't visit Japan to become a fine Suzuki teacher, but a visit there can broaden our perspective in a myriad of ways.

**Nancy Modell** was fortunate to study the Suzuki Approach with esteemed teachers: Sanford Reuning, Carole Bigler, and Valery Lloyd-Watts. She pioneered Suzuki Piano in Israel in the 1980s as a Suzuki Piano Teacher Trainer, and today, she employs the Taubman Approach to enhance Suzuki Piano pedagogy. Nancy inspires her students to reach their potential through innovative learning opportunities, including original composition, music events, and field trips. She explores ways to introduce composition to students of all levels and promotes her methods at national and international conferences and in music teachers' organizations. She is an SAA Board member, NJ Suzuki Workshop Piano Coordinator, and a past President of MEA-NJ.





# Where love is deep

Jan Matthiesen, ESA Teacher Trainer

I just got off Shinkansen (express train from Tokyo) when I noticed a big sign “Welcome to the Suzuki Teacher Trainers Convention 2023 in Matsumoto”, and just below the sign I saw a group of old friends and upon arrival to the hotel there were even more from all parts of the globe. Immediately you felt the warm atmosphere of this gathering of friends sharing the same vision.



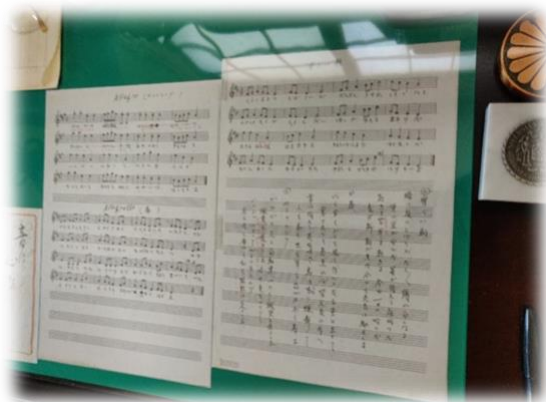
This was my third trip to Japan, the first one was for the Olympic Celebration Concert 25 years ago, 1 month after Dr. Suzuki passed away. A lot has changed since then, but his spirit was still present, living on in all the Suzuki Teachers who have been touched by him. The desire for maintaining the legacy and at the same time keeping up with the modern society, with all the challenges and possibilities it brings, was present through all the lectures and talks. TERI had done a marvellous job preparing this, so we felt welcome.

Every day started with videos from the archives, some of them we haven't seen before. (On ISA's homepage you will find a lot of videos, hopefully the ones we saw will also be available there soon. Then we had lectures and group discussions on different topics like; graduation systems, international accreditation, teaching beginners, recordings, and editions ...They had also organized beautiful Japanese meal, so we could sit together sharing ideas, memories, and visions.



On Dr. Suzuki's 125 birthday TERI had organized a trip to visit his grave, which resides on a beautiful quiet hilltop a short drive from the town. This was a very special experience, that brought back memories. “Wishing” was playing in the background when we all had the chance to lay flowers and the grave and sending our gratitude. We continued to Suzuki's House, which is now a museum. For me the most special place to visit was his study, where you could see some of his original scores and feel the atmosphere of the place where he was listening to an extreme number of graduation tapes.

In a time with many big conflicts and problems in the world I think this gathering was more important than



ever. For a week the world became much smaller and the countries from near and far reconnected through the philosophy and spirit of Dr. Suzuki. My wish for the future is that we will continue to connect and share, even when the physical distance is great – we could continue also keep using some of the tools we learned during the Covid crisis. But nothing beats being together in real life.

A warm thank you to TERI for organizing the convention and I cannot wait to see my Suzuki family again.



The mother of **Jan Matthiesen** was one of the first Suzuki™ Teachers in Denmark, so naturally he grew up as a Suzuki™ Violin student and was so fortunate to have the chance of participating in several European and International Conferences with Dr. Suzuki. He continued his study of violin at the Academy of Music in Aarhus, primarily with Tutter Givskov as teacher. At this time quite a lot of other Suzuki™ Students were studying there together. Tutter Givskov succeeded in creating a wonderful teaching atmosphere in her class, so it was a great continuation of the Suzuki™ spirit. Jan received his training to become a Suzuki™ Teacher by the great teacher and Suzuki™ pioneer Tove Detreköy.

He has been teaching violin using the Suzuki™ Method since 1983 and is currently teaching in students at all levels in Aarhus Musicschool together with a group of dedicated Suzuki™ teachers. Several of his students have won prizes in competitions and pursued a professional career in violin.

In 1997 Jan Matthiesen was appointed Teacher Trainer by ESA (European Suzuki Association), and has been conducting Teacher Training courses in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. He is also teaching violin pedagogy at the Academy of Music in Aarhus and has since 2000 been a member of the Jury of the Jacob Gade Violincompetition. He has taught on workshops all over Europe, on International and European Suzuki™ Conventions.

Jan Matthiesen is also the father of 4 children, they all play or have played the violin, so he knows all the roles in the Suzuki™ triangle (teacher, parent & child) and is still learning.

## My Thoughts on the Third International Teacher Trainer Convention

Erica Booker

I was thrilled to be able to attend the TTC in Matsumoto, October 2023.

First, just being in Matsumoto, my heartland for over half of my life, touched me deeply.

Second, meeting up physically with soul-friends from around the world affirmed connections and love for my Suzuki sisters and brothers.

Then the Convention began, with collegiality, camaraderie, affirmation, love and respect.

I'm not exaggerating to say that all addresses in the opening session, and throughout the conference, were inspirational, inclusive, and excellently translated. This made every word accessible to all attending.

I had thought deeply beforehand about the three major topics for discussion-

1. International Accreditations
2. Graduation
3. Teacher Training- how to best transfer the breadth and depth of Suzuki Philosophy and Pedagogy to young teachers in today's world.

It is difficult to summarise the hours of earnest and motivating discussions, in small groups, and in plenary sessions, but every aspect was dissected and discussed deeply and honestly by all participants. Each Trainer had valuable points to contribute, and all were evaluated.

It is not surprising to note that it soon became clear to us all that the Suzuki Music world is huge, diverse and idiosyncratic, and each region needed to work within the restraints of their geographic and economic strictures. Therefore, traditional 'conformity' was not sought or expected, but each region was respected and valued in their choices.

This was particularly evident when discussing Graduation. It was agreed that Graduation was a means to maintain motivation and achievement. Some regions found Graduation too difficult and expensive to consider, whilst others chose the regular Graduation system. Other regions who had the freedom of choice chose many alternatives to maintain motivation, including the traditional Graduation path.

Perhaps the most motivating parts of the Convention were when we, in small groups and then in larger sessions, (and later through meals, breaks and in friendship groups,) continued to speak deeply on maintaining the integrity of Dr Suzuki's philosophy and pedagogy in our rapidly changing world.



It was wonderful to connect with the large number of Trainers from all over the world who have been in the Suzuki family since the 60's and 70's. It was also heart-warming to mingle with the new generations of beautiful and powerful Trainers, and to be affirmed that the future is in good hands.

We all left the Convention with full hearts and recharged spirits, and a vow to meet again VERY soon, hopefully in just a few years' time.

**Erica Booker** graduated from the NSW Conservatorium of Music in both Performing and Teaching. She studied with two of Sydney's foremost Russian teachers, Igor Hmeltnitsky and Alexander Sverjensky.

Erica has been a performer, (solo, ensemble and concerto), an accompanist, a piano and classroom music teacher, a choral conductor and an adjudicator of eisteddfods, competitions and exhibitions. She was also NSW President of Childbirth Education Association for several years, helping to set up a training course for Childbirth Educators and organising the first Birth Centres in Sydney.



Since 1979 Erica has taught piano and lectured around the world following the Suzuki philosophy. She is a Suzuki Piano Teacher Trainer and also takes Suzuki Early Childhood Education Music classes. Her studio has students across the spectrum from age 3 to advanced, tertiary, and trainee teachers. Erica's music studio has four pianos with three different sized keyboards, unique in the world. She is an advocate for different sized piano keyboards for different sized hands.



# A Report from the Third International Suzuki Trainers Convention in Matsumoto, Japan

Beth Titterington

Our Japanese hosts were incredibly hospitable! The TERI (Talent Education Research Institute) committee, which has been working diligently to organize this conference, succeeded in making it a truly extraordinary experience. Throughout the three-day event, there was a clear sense of respect among all participants. The TERI Conference Committee presented four topics for us to consider: International Credentials for Suzuki Teachers, Expansion of Graduation Systems, Early Childhood Beginnings (ages 0–2), and the consideration of tone in the training of Suzuki Teachers. In this report, I will focus on the first two topics.

First, I would like to discuss the International Credentials topic, as I was assigned to moderate discussion during breakout groups. Currently, the five regions of the International Suzuki Association (TERI, SAA, ESA, PPSA, ARSA) have different requirements (credentials) for Suzuki teachers who wish to teach in another region. After extensive discussions, it was agreed that an ISA committee would be established, consisting of representatives from each region, to study this matter. While each region maintains its autonomy, it was evident that there are many commonalities among the requirements. The goal of the ISA committee is to create a document outlining these common credentials, which will then be presented to all regions for feedback. It was also emphasized that teachers who move to a new region must respect and adapt to the cultural differences they will encounter in teaching. The breakout group discussions revealed more similarities than differences among the regions. Fernando Pinero noted that the atmosphere from the first Trainers Conference in Boston to the Madrid Conference and then to now, in Matsumoto, has grown warmer and warmer! Additionally, with the increasing popularity of online teaching and training, it is hoped that a global approach to credential regulations will be possible. It was heartening to witness the mutual respect shown by teachers from every region towards each other's training systems.

Next, I will report on the second topic: the Expansion of Graduation Systems / Graduation Celebrations worldwide. Again, there were extensive discussions and valuable insights gained. However, there seemed to be a prevalent misconception that a Graduation concert serves as a “judgment” of the student. Many experienced trainers who studied with Dr. Suzuki shared the same understanding that the intention of the Graduation process is to assess the teacher's ability to teach. Dr. Suzuki considered all students in Japan to be his students and wanted to evaluate the abilities of their teachers. So, in Japan, this process occurs annually at a fixed time of year. Students prepare their graduation piece and submit a recording to committees of teachers, who listen and provide feedback. Each student receives a Graduation Certificate. The feedback comments are meant to encourage the student, and the Graduation concert serves as a celebration of their hard work. All teachers benefit from hearing performances by students from other teachers and by reading their own students' comments. This allows them to continually improve their teaching skills. Parents are inspired by the beautiful performances and are encouraged to support their children's continued efforts. The entire community finds inspiration, setting higher goals for the following year. It was important for everyone to understand the Graduation System better and to eliminate misconceptions.

In TERI, the Japanese teachers also hold Twinkle Graduation concerts. Many teachers shared how these celebration concerts serve as motivation for everyone involved. After the concert, students receive a “Twinkle Sticker” that they can place on their violin case if they choose to do so. All participants in the

Suzuki community are motivated and inspired.

Reflecting on this topic of graduation celebrations, I recall Alice Joy Lewis's strong enthusiasm for the graduation system. She organized the concert every year during her summer Suzuki Institute in Ottawa, Kansas. She was meticulous about stipulating which book a student should be in to be eligible to record their graduation piece. For example, a violin student would need to be in Book 3 to be ready to record all of Book 1. This ensured that the student's performance exhibited a true sense of polish and musicality. Mrs. Lewis's graduation concert grew larger each year and often included over 100 students from the region. Every time I was asked to listen to recordings, I grew as a teacher, and every time I attended a graduation concert, I experienced further growth in my teaching. I am grateful for Alice Joy's unwavering commitment to having the graduation system! Our area of the country benefited greatly from the experience. We are continuing the Graduation Celebration System for our region.

**Beth Titterington** has been involved in the Suzuki Method since the autumn of 1972 when she first heard the Japanese Talent Education Tour Group. She has studied with many people in the Talent Education field including, most importantly, Dr. Suzuki. She traveled to the American Suzuki Institute in the summer of 1973 to study the Method. She went back each summer thanks to the encouragement of the director, Margery Aber. Mrs. Titterington is currently a Violin Teacher Trainer for the Suzuki Association of the Americas and served on the SAA Board of Directors from 2006-2009. She founded an SAA regional affiliate, the Heart of America Suzuki Association, in 1979. From 1975 to the present, she has taught at hundreds of Suzuki Institutes and Workshops in the United States, Canada and in England. She received her M.M. from the University of Missouri (KC) Conservatory in 1977 and then studied the baroque violin with Marilyn McDonald at Oberlin and Michaela Comberti in London. Mrs. Titterington has been adjunct faculty at both the University of Missouri (KC) Conservatory and the University of Kansas. She continues to maintain her private studio, Kansas City Talent Education. As a baroque violinist and gambist, she and her husband John directed the Kansas City Period Orchestra for 20 years. She continues to enjoy teaching children to play the violin and training new Suzuki teachers ... both of them equally!



## International Suzuki Teacher Trainers Convention

Christophe Bossuat, Violin Teacher Trainer ESA

The first word is a big 'Thank You' to our Japanese colleagues who organised this event so beautifully!

I encountered a lot of kindness, good organisation and thoughtfulness concerning the process of thinking and speaking about the different topics we had to deal with. We also had very nicely organized social events which took place allowing long-time colleagues to be together and enjoy each other.

I appreciated how each topic was first presented with a moderator then talked about in different smaller groups where many of us could voice our point of view. This ended with the topic being summarised by the same moderator sometimes with an added perspective.

There was a further development with exchanges which had already started at the last conference in Madrid. Each of us was given a good opportunity to see clearly how each region organises itself with Teacher Training, Tonalisation and the growing topic of Early Child Development.

We saw different ways of doing things, particularly with Teacher Training and Tonalisation. Obviously, people in each region had to find a way that suits them best. There was no question that quality Teacher Training is important or that Tonalisation is important, but that there was more than one way of doing it. These differences can make us think whilst being still united and valuing the same things.

On the topic of an International Accreditation, we kind of approached the subject thinking on what basis such an accreditation could be validated - it is a start. There is still a long way to go here, and I will say that, unless we elect a special team with representatives from each region to deal with this topic, we cannot expect to see much happening. Let us repeat what has already been talked about - it is not about changing anything; it is first about each region positioning itself on this issue knowing precisely how the other regions function.

Last of all and but not least, we could witness how much our Japanese colleagues cherish and value the work of Shinichi Suzuki Sensei. It is important for all of us to know and respect where our movement comes from. These are our roots, it has helped us to become who we are in our work, it is an immense legacy.



However, if Man is the Son of his Environment, we are also responsible for creating a good environment for the children for around us and for ourselves. On the first page of Nurtured by Love, the work is clearly defined - pull up your sleeves and stop blaming society, bad times, your parents, or anybody. The form of the environment we create will evolve with me and we should not always stick to old ideas or models. Shinichi Suzuki Sensei demonstrated this clearly himself - new old ideas! Yes, let us find new ideas, new models, continue the way with new perspectives, in harmony with our roots. The perspective is to elevate the children and ourselves at the same time and be together. There is no end to life's movement. Shinichi Suzuki was the archer, and we were the arrows with the destiny to become archers ourselves who can throw more arrows. I saw many archers in this conference - it was a good feeling!

**Christophe Bossuat**, Teacher Trainer Violin, Country Director France, was one of the first Violin Teachers studying with Dr. Suzuki in Matsumoto - he was a "*kenkyusei*" from 1976-1978 when he graduated. After returning to France, he founded the national Suzuki association together with Judy W. Bossuat- Gallic. At the same time, Christophe and Judy both founded the "Ecole de Musique Suzuki de Lyon" which soon became a centre of Suzuki Teaching and Teacher Training in France. Christophe was a member of the ESA Board from the early 80's to April 2020 and has been invited as Workshop Teacher and Lecturer all over Europe, America, and Canada. He pioneered the SUZUKI™ Method in Spain, Italy, and Turkey and since 2001 has been building up a Teacher Training Course in South Africa.





# Report on Exchange Group Lesson and Concert

Eri Nakata and Yoko Ishikawa

The instrumental group lessons and children's concerts were held on the afternoon of Sunday, October 15. This date was chosen because the last day of the Teacher Trainer Conference coincided with the date of TERI's annual teachers' workshop.

The decision to hold this event was based on the strong desire of Akira Nakajima, Chairman of the Organizing Committee, for more exchanges between teachers from overseas and teachers in Japan, and for TERI students to be able to take lessons from teachers from overseas.

About 250 people, both teachers and students, attended the event. The first half of the event consisted of group lessons given by violin, cello and flute teachers. In the case of piano, five teachers from five different regions gave public lessons, each with one TERI student.







In the second half, the students gathered in the main hall for a group lesson with the entire department. The pieces were "Hunter's Chorus", "Perpetual Motion", "Allegro", and "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star Variations".

The teachers made various efforts to interest the students of all departments; Suzuki teachers are always the best for their students no matter where they are in the world.

At the end of the event, a concert was held for the students of all instrumental divisions. The concert was also attended by students from the 0-3 years class. Koji Toyoda, Honorary President of TERI, gave us a shout-out on stage.



## Special Tour to Celebrate Dr. Suzuki's 125th Birthday

Kayono Nagata

The International Teacher Trainer Conference was held in Matsumoto from Friday, October 13 to Sunday, October 15, and in connection with the 125th birthday of Shinichi Suzuki on Tuesday, October 17, a graveside tour was held for the teachers who came from overseas on the 17th.

Although the International Teacher Trainers Conference ended on October 15, about 60 teachers who stayed behind to celebrate the birthday divided into two buses for the special tour. Akira Nakajima, Chairman of the Executive Committee, and I, Vice Chairman of the Executive Committee, accompanied them on each bus.



We were blessed with a beautiful sunny day, and it seemed as if Dr. Suzuki warmly welcomed us all. The first destination of the second bus I boarded was the "Shinichi Suzuki Memorial Museum" where he used to live. Everyone was immersed in their own memories and feelings as they looked at the many artifacts, documents, and DVDs. The general public also came with great enthusiasm to see the footsteps of the Suzuki Method as it spread overseas. Seeing so many teachers and trainers in person, they seemed to have a deep sense of the Suzuki Method that has spread overseas.

Car 1, accompanied by Executive Committee Chairman Nakajima, first visited a grave and then the Shinichi Suzuki Memorial Museum.

Car 2 then visited the grave. At the grave, they laid flowers one by one, prayed for the repose of his soul, and remembered their reunion after a long time. They sang "Happy Birthday" to the grave and sang beautiful songs that are seldom heard in the cemetery. A little further up the hill from the cemetery, there was a beautiful panoramic view of Matsumoto, which I felt left a beautiful memory in each of their hearts. Although it was only a short tour, I was able to participate in the tour as a member of the Suzuki family wishing for the happiness of the children of the world, and I was deeply impressed by Dr. Suzuki's words, "Every child is nurtured by his or her teacher."

