American Suzuki Journal

The official publication of the
Suzuki Association of the Americas, Inc.

Volume 46 #3


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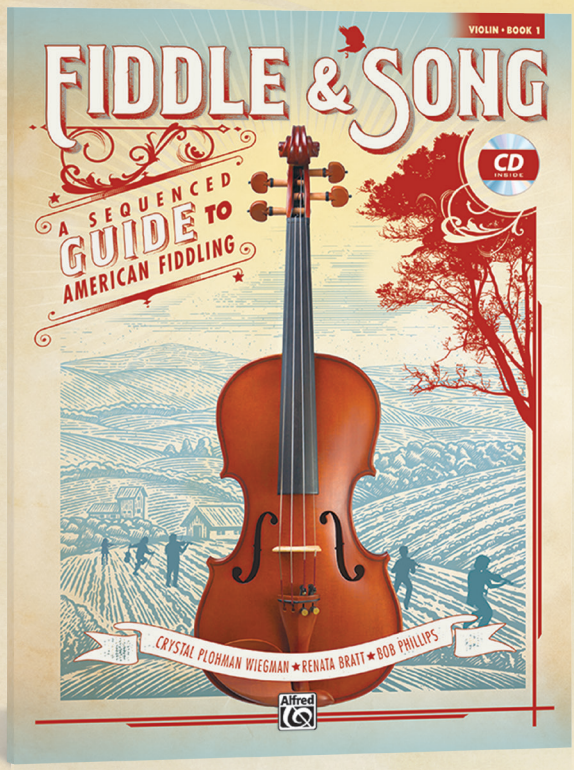

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Introduce your students to easy and fun settings of American music with this brand new collection and fiddling method of carefully sequenced tunes and exercises.

Available for violin, viola, cello/bass, and piano accompaniment, this fiddle curriculum functions as a companion to any method for private instruction, Suzuki group class, and ensembles where students of various ages, levels, and instruments can play together.

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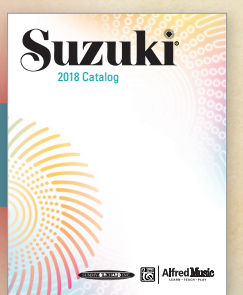

LEARN MORE AT OUR FIDDLE & SONG SESSION:



Fiddle & Song: Fiddling Can Begin with Beginners and Include Everyone!

Renata Bratt, Bob Phillips, and Crystal Plohman Wiegman

Friday, May 25, 8:30 a.m.–9:20 a.m., Ballroom ABC

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Chair's Column

By Joan Krzywicki, *Chair*

Time. We all have the same amount of it. Yet many of us probably feel that we never have enough time to do everything we would like to do. Just this week, a colleague told me that she wished she had more time to listen to music. Another one said that she never had enough time to practice. We all struggle with managing time.

As Suzuki teachers we have to organize and maintain our teaching schedules, which might include individual lessons, group lessons, and parent meetings. In preparing for the lessons that we teach, we may have to listen to music recordings and practice the repertoire ourselves. Sometimes we have to spend time writing emails to parents about upcoming events. We also make sure that students are registered for events outside of our studios, including workshops, festivals, area-wide recitals, etc. All of the above become priorities in our professional lives.

In addition, we have to respond to inquiries about our Suzuki program, which might also mean meeting with prospective parents by phone or in person. Or we may need to spend time with a parent who is having difficulty with his/her responsibilities and needs our guidance. And I haven't yet mentioned other aspects of our lives, including our spouses and children, our performing gigs, our work with chapter affiliates or other organizations, etc. To be sure, there are days when all of this can be overwhelming.

Suzuki parents might have an even bigger challenge in managing time, especially if they have young children, or if they are working full time, or both.

We all need to find ways to reduce the stress that our teaching careers might give us. My advice to all of you is to find your "cup of tea." A number of years ago, when I was hospitalized for a few weeks, recovering from surgery, my husband brought me some special green tea and made me a cup of it every afternoon. At the time, he intended for the tea to help in my healing process, but in the end, it became a way of life. Every day now, I make the time to sit down and savor my tea. As I enjoy the warmth and flavor, I usually do some reading. But sometimes I listen to music, or perhaps I surf the internet on a subject that I have wanted to pursue. A half an hour goes by, and then I am rejuvenated and can meet my teaching schedule that day with energy and commitment. My "cup of tea" has become so important to me that I actually make sure it is in my daily schedule.

For some of you, your stress reliever may not be tea, or coffee. It may be a walk outside somewhere. It is amazing what a 20- or 30-minute walk can do in the middle of the afternoon, especially on a beautiful day. Yoga or some kind of meditation can also offer a wonderful break in the middle of a day. Playing one's instrument just for pleasure could also transport you to a different world. It is important for all of us to find something in our lives that can take us away from our work for a short time and then let us come back to it full of renewed spirit.

Teaching and parenting with excellence requires lots of skills, including the ability to take a break sometimes! Best wishes to all of you for many quiet moments just for yourselves.

2018 Calendar of Events

1st of each month	Newsletter (ShortScore) Submissions due
Aug. 1, Nov. 1, Feb. 1, May 1	ASJ Submissions due
July 31	SAA Fiscal Year End
September 1	1st Suzuki Convention of the Americas registration open. Visit http://www.suzukimexico.org/
September 7 – 9	SAA Board Meeting, Boulder, CO
September 25	Institutes Preliminary Dates Due
September 30	Premier Business Member Contracts Due
October 15	Institute Applications Due

SPA

Upcoming SPA Course

For more information on SPA and to register, visit https://suzukiassociation.org/events/course/spa/

September 2018

Music Institute of Chicago ***Oct 5 – 6, 2018***	*Poughkeepsie, NY* *Trainer: Teri Einfeldt*

Suzuki Association of the Americas, Inc.

ASJ Article Submissions

We welcome article submissions on Suzuki-related topics. Deadlines are November 1, February 1, May 1 and August 1 for the winter, spring, summer, and fall issues, respectively, but we accept manuscripts year-round. We accept emailed articles, either included in the body of the message or as .doc or .docx attachments and manuscripts on disc by mail. Please do not send articles as PDF attachments. Email manuscripts to editor@suzukiassociation.org. Please include a short bio and author photo with your submission. Contact publications@suzukiassociation.org for more information.

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POSTMASTER: Send address changes to American Suzuki Journal, P.O. Box 17310, Boulder, CO 80308-0310.

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Reflections on Serving on the SAA Board of Directors

Outgoing members of the SAA Board of Directors reflect below on their time serving our organization. Thank you for your hard work!

Wendy Azrak

I had the wonderful fortune of being able to serve on the SAA Board of Directors from 2014–2017. It really was a great opportunity to meet and connect with other people who are also passionate about seeing Dr. Suzuki's dream continue on.

There was never a board meeting that didn't focus large amounts of time on discussing, dreaming, and conceiving of ways that Dr. Suzuki's hopes, which he entrusted to all of us, be realized. He wanted to see children everywhere be able to grow and learn freely. We discussed how to maintain access and support to families and teachers in the Americas. We heard about the exciting programs that happen and we seriously discussed any issues that might impede the development of good teaching.

I enjoyed when we visited various cities and had a chance to meet teachers from those areas. I also enjoyed just being together as the board. Although most of our time was spent in simple conference rooms around a big table, we enjoyed taking walks wherever we were.

Wendy Azrak has been teaching Suzuki violin since 1974. She trained and worked with leading teachers and pioneers of the Suzuki method in the United States. She was the director of the Scio Ridge Suzuki Studio and on the faculty of the Ann Arbor Suzuki Institute. She had an active studio in her home in Ann Arbor Michigan where she taught both violin and viola students. Wendy has her bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Michigan and is a Teacher Trainer in violin; she especially enjoys getting teachers started on their Suzuki journey. Wendy had the privilege of serving on the Board of Directors for SAA from 2014–17. In June 2017, Wendy retired from active teaching to move to Charlotte, NC, to be with family.

I also found it fascinating when we had a chance to improve our work and vision as a board. We learned about fundraising when we went to Philadelphia. There we met with a Suzuki mom who is a fundraiser for the Curtis Institute. Or when we went to Los Angeles and learned how to tell our story more clearly from a parent who does feature pieces for NPR. We also learned about courageous advocacy from another parent who is in the entertainment world and has been a strong advocate for the arts.

I also had the honor to work with very fine, dedicated people who take this board work very seriously, and have wonderful fun while they are together. Since we are from such different parts of the country, we most likely would not have met or become so close.

When I was asked to be on the board, I thought they had made a mistake. I haven't accomplished big things. I just teach my students. But as I attended meetings, I found that my voice was valued and I felt the freedom to bring my own thoughts to the conversation and listen and reflect what others were saying.

Thank you for the honor of allowing me to serve on the SAA Board of Directors.

Susan McDonald

Tell us about your Suzuki background both as a student, parent, and teacher?

I am fortunate to have lived on all three sides of the Suzuki triangle: as one of the first generations of Suzuki students in the US, as the mother of two Suzuki violinists, and as a teacher.

Did you enjoy the visionary aspects of your board time?

"Visioning" is actually the thing I was most concerned about when I first joined the board. In my teaching and in my administrative work, my focus had always been on the details. Board work challenged me to step back and consider the bigger questions: "If we have been successful, what will Suzuki education look like in 50 years?" As board members, we have to look beyond our own studios and programs and consider what is required to make excellent Suzuki education available to every child, just as Dr. Suzuki did. Having a clearer picture of what we want to achieve on a global scale helps give meaning and direction to the details we attend to every day.

Is there anything that surprised you about the experience?

As a board, we function under a system called "Policy Governance" which defines our role and our responsibilities to the SAA. I was surprised at the learning curve required to understand this structure, and impressed with how well it works once I understood it. Our policies are revisited regularly to make sure they reflect our intentions.

What was your favorite aspect of being on the board?

This is an easy question to answer: it was the people I got to work with. We spent nearly every waking moment together on board weekends at meetings, at meals, and events like concerts and "meet and greets" where we got to know teachers in local programs. I can't imagine a more welcoming or dedicated group, and ended my term knowing

Susan Montzka McDonald began her violin study at age five as a Suzuki student of Kazuko Numanami in Oberlin, Ohio. She earned her BME from Lawrence University Conservatory and her MA (violin performance) from WIU, where she studied Suzuki pedagogy with Almita Vamos. She continued her long-term pedagogy study with John Kendall at SIU–Edwardsville. Ms. McDonald is the Suzuki coordinator at the Webster University Community Music School, where she has taught for 30 years. She has taught at the Chicago, Colorado, Florida, and Louisville Suzuki Institutes, and is the mother of two Suzuki violin graduates. Ms. McDonald is served a three-year term on the SAA Board of Directors.

that I had made life-long friends. The respect and support we gave one another is something I will remember and cherish, and collaborating in that environment gave me the confidence to move beyond my comfort zone. It felt the way I would want students to feel in group class!

Holly Blackwelder-Carpenter

What is one of your memorable moments from your time on the Board?

On a personal level, I carry many fond memories of conversations with colleagues with whom I would not have interacted outside of our board service and now consider to be friends and respected mentors. On a professional level, I enjoyed watching the launch of the Suzuki Alumni Project and attending the inaugural concert in Philadelphia. As a mother to young children, being able to just sit and enjoy a concert was a rare treat, and it was also wonderful because I knew or knew of so many of the performers and audience members this underscored the Suzuki Community that I belong to, the thought that I could go anywhere in the world and find someone with a shared repertoire of music and life experiences was wonderful.

What surprised you about Board service?

I have sat on quite a number of boards, and the level of professionalism, the ability to argue different viewpoints, and at the end, reach an agreement that all members stand behind is truly a testament to the level of dedication and character of each board member. I often found myself, when discussing my weekend plans, telling friends I was going to a board meeting—and that I couldn't wait! It is true, I found the level of intellectual stimulation, discussion, and camaraderie such that I eagerly looked forward to "Board weekends."

What SAA accomplishments during your term are you most proud of?

I was quite proud of the Birthday Fundraiser we created. I really enjoyed watching the cake grow, and felt it was a fun way to work towards a common goal as a community and also I enjoyed watching the dedications of people who lived far away or nearby. I know I enjoyed contributing and the chance dedicate my contribution as a public thank you. It was inspiring to see what we could do if we each gave a little and strengthened my viewpoint that if we all donated just a little extra each year, $10–$100 per person, whatever we were able, we would be able to achieve some of our longstanding dreams as an organization and dream new dreams!

How did being a mom and a teacher impact your Board service in positive ways?

As a mother and a Suzuki parent, my viewpoint is one that dwells in the present as well as the future. As a parent, I feel strongly that the gift of time with your child during practice is incalculable in today's society but also recognize the challenges of that one-on-one interaction. Because of this perspective, I feel strongly that the Suzuki method can change family interactions for the better, and through that make a world-wide impact. I found board service to be an avenue by which I could contribute in a small way to such an impact. This knowledge drove me to strive for my very best on the board no matter the topic under consideration.

As a teacher, I started my board time as a private studio instructor, self-employed, in a large metro area filled with Suzuki teachers and studios. During my time on the board I moved to a small town, set up a private studio from scratch, and then was hired by a school to teach violin and conduct three orchestras. This varied combination, all in a short amount of time, enabled me to speak from different perspectives: metro, rural, established studio, new studio, and school studio. I think that combination as a teacher allowed me to bring a broad perspective to our discussions as they relate to the everyday work of our membership and helped me provide thoughts on the effectiveness of different initiatives to the various working situations of our membership.

Holly Blackwelder Carpenter begin her violin studies at age five with Kathleen Spring in Walla Walla, WA. She received her BA in music and theology in from Walla Walla University, an MA in Old Testament from Andrews Theological Seminary, and an MA from the University of Texas at Austin in Hebrew language and literature. Holly has registered training in the Suzuki Violin Method through Book Seven and Books One through Three Overview in Spanish. She taught in the string preparatory program at Walla Walla College from 1995–2000 and at the Universidad Peruana Union near Lima, Peru, from 1997–98 and has maintained private studios in Austin, TX, Seattle, WA, and Walla Walla, WA. In 2016 she was hired as the Strings Director for Rogers Adventist School, where she instructs a full private studio in addition to directing three orchestras for students in grades three through eight. She has been the Director of the Japan Seattle Suzuki Institute since 2010. Holly served on the Board of the Suzuki Association of the Americas from 2014–2016.

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Practicing with the Skills of Empathy

By Alan Duncan

To the casual observer of parents practicing with their children, the only skill children are learning is to play a musical instrument. But Suzuki parents are well aware that a different kind of skill building is at work in the practice room, one that equips children to work well with others, to solve complex problems, and to meet difficulties with grace. Practicing together, parents and their children are on parallel paths, each developing their own sets of skills. Children develop perseverance, focus, perspective, and self-compassion. Meanwhile, parents hone their own skills: patience, creativity, commitment, and empathy. Over the course of my career in academic medicine I taught courses in communication skills to hundreds of medical students, interns and residents, an experience that has been invaluable in my "second career" as a Suzuki parent. I've come to the realization that relating well to people in the practice of medicine and working effectively with children in practicing music requires some similar skills, mainly the practice of empathy. In this article, I would like to propose not only that empathy is the most important skill that a parent can bring to practice, but that it is both a *state of mind* and an *active skill*, one that can be developed.

Empathy is often misunderstood as solely a state of mind in which a person feels exactly as another feels. This confuses empathy with sympathy. Of course, we cannot feel exactly the same way as someone else because our lived experience is unique. In the case of empathy, we are not trying to mirror the emotional state of someone else so much as we are employing an ability to understand, name, and respond to the emotions that someone is experiencing. We can also distinguish empathy from compassion, as the latter is implies a feeling that motivates one to actively intervene on behalf of another. In practicing with empathy, we are not so much trying to intervene as to accurately understand our child's emotional state so that we can fine-tune our own responses rather than "fix" a problem.

Empathy as a State of Mind

Empathy, as commonly understood, is a state of mind, one that nearly all of us possess, in which we recognize the emotional state of another person from their unique perspective. Neuroscientists are beginning to uncover the physical origins of the impulses that "synchronize" emotional states between two people. Found in so-called "mirror neurons," nerve cells that become active in synchrony when we understand the emotions of another person, this may be a physical explanation for this common occurrence. Like many abilities of the mind, it can be developed. We can learn to develop a set of abilities that embody the skills of empathy.

Empathy as a Skill

Thinking of empathy as a skill allows us to actively work toward a better understanding of our children's perspectives. Empathy as an active skill comprises four key components: awareness, naming the emotional state, listening, and responding.

Become Aware of Empathic Moments

When things are going well in practice, most of the interactions are about skill-building. "Can you make a better bow hold? Can you curve your fingers more? Let's do that five more times." But seldom does practice go exactly like this in a completely transactional way. When we ask children to stretch and develop their musical skills, it can be frustrating, tiring, or anxiety-provoking. Practice partners can hone their empathic skills by dialing up their sensitivity to the child's emotional reactions. Sometimes I think of it as splitting my thoughts about practice in two. On one side, I'm listening for pitch, rhythm, dynamics, and expression while watching posture, bowing, and hand position. But on the other side, I'm watching over the entire process of practice and how we're responding to the challenges. By dividing attention mindfully between the musical work and the emotional work, the practice partner can avoid running a steamroller over the child's emotions. Often that awareness comes not only from what the child says, but her body language, sighing, and drifting attention. By being aware of these impending derailments, we can begin to steer practice in a different direction.

One way of beginning to recognize these moments is to reflect on occasions when conflict arose in practice. By looking at these occurrences as failed opportunities to apply empathic skills, we can learn to recognize them when they occur in the future. This sort of emotional detective work can be a very fertile training ground for becoming a more skilled Suzuki parent.

Name the Emotion

There is a power in having someone recognize and accurately describe back to us how we're feeling. Children, who may lack the nuanced language for describing how they feel, sometimes react negatively to challenges during practice. As

a parent, the empathic skill of stopping practice to acknowledge and name the child's emotional state can both reset the course of practice and help deepen the trust between parent and child.

Parent: *"You seem a little frustrated with this section."*
Child: *"It's too hard. I can't do it."*
Parent: *"I get it. Sometimes when it's really hard, it makes you frustrated and feel hopeless. Do you want to keep working on it or move on to something else?"*

Here, the parent took note of the child's growing frustration and named the emotion, giving the child an opportunity to respond. Afterward, the parent again acknowledged the emotions (frustration, hopelessness) and offered a pair of acceptable solutions. By naming the child's emotion, even if we are not entirely sure of what it is, we can give her a chance to speak up before the entire practice goes off the rails. Often, simply shifting our role from "practice partner" to that of an emotional observer is disarming enough to diffuse tension that would otherwise disrupt practice.

Listen Empathically

The skill of empathy is dominated by the ability to listen well. When parents listen empathically, they establish good eye contact and avoid interrupting the child. They summarize briefly their understanding of what the child is saying, giving the child a chance to agree or disagree with the parent.

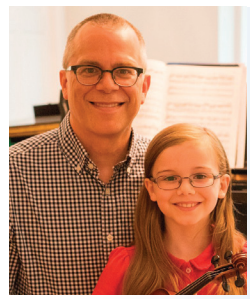
Parent: *"It seems like this is bothering you."*
Child: *"You're so picky with everything. You always say it's out of tune and you make me do it one more time. But then you make me do it a bunch of times."*
Parent: *"So it seems like I'm never satisfied with your playing and when I ask you to do it again, I'm not very specific about how many times to do it."*
Child: *"Yes."*
Parent: *"I guess if I felt like I could never please my parent I'd feel pretty sad. And then it would be miserable to have to keep doing it over and over."*

In this interaction, the parent stopped practice because the child seemed frustrated again. Without confronting the child directly, he simply offers a conjecture about what's wrong. It's a form of open-ended inquiry that allows the child to speak up. When she does, it's clear that two things are bothering her. First, she is sad because she's trying to please the parent but in her eyes, the parent is perpetually unsatisfiable. Furthermore, when he asks her to do more, it seems endless. To demonstrate that he heard her, he first summarizes what she said. Then, after she acknowledges his synopsis, the parent offers an empathic understanding in a way that normalizes the emotion. One way to practice listening as an empathic skill is to summarize your understanding of the child's feelings back to her. By gradually reflecting the child's words with increasing clarity you can hone in on exactly what they are experiencing. This sort of reflective listening is a key empathic skill.

Respond Empathically

In the vignette above, the parent's skillful response is the only factor that kept practice from devolving into an argument. Had the parent simply insisted on doing the prescribed number of repetitions irrespective of the child's reaction, the outcome would almost certainly have been unsatisfactory. The child might have been compelled by the parent's force of will, but little learning or improvement would have taken place. Instead, in just a few words, the parent correctly infers the child's emotional state and normalizes her reaction. This connection opens the door to more willingness to do a few more repetitions and it affirms the partnership. In responding with empathy, I often think of how I can use language to convey partnership rather than an adversarial relationship. We want to come alongside the child rather than bumping head-on. In some respects, responding empathically is akin the variety of methods that actors bring to the stage when trying to deliver authentic performances. They may use surface acting to mimic the gestures and inflections of a particular emotional state, or they may attempt to recreate that emotional state by trying to mirror that state in their own minds. Likewise, in the practice room, we can diffuse tensions and solve problems both by using open body language and a tone of voice that convey understanding and partnership while also responding authentically from a deep understanding of the child's perspective.

Sometimes it seems that talent education calls on parents to do the impossible: to get young kinetic children to settle down and practice, to work with older children who are clamoring for independence, and to work with teens who are trying to navigate busy complex lives. This sets the stage for moments of conflict that punctuate otherwise effective practice. One of the key ingredients of genuine working relationships between parents and children is empathy, and by thinking of empathy as both a state of mind and a group of learnable skills, we can practice even more effectively. ❋



Alan Duncan is the parent practice partner for a nine-year-old violinist. As a pianist he has performed with Trio Grazioso and is currently an accompanist at the Forest City Talent Education School in London, Ontario, where he also serves on the Board of Directors. Previously he served on the boards of the Southeastern Minnesota Suzuki Association and the Southeastern Minnesota Youth Orchestras.

Beautiful Tone, Beautiful—What?

By William Kossler

The Question

"Beautiful tone, beautiful heart." The famous words of Dr. Suzuki connecting these two concepts were for a long time a real mystery to me. We are all familiar with the stereotype of the egotistical virtuoso who is abusive of everyone around

First of All, Why the Emphasis on Tone?

Several major events come to mind concerning my education about tone as I was learning about the Suzuki method in the early 1980s. One of the first things that impressed me about Dr. Suzuki was that to him, teachers' quality hinged on how musically their students played, not on how far along in the books they were. A second major impression was something I got from my studies with Mr. Takahashi (author of the Suzuki Flute Method) during my year-long stint at Dr. Suzuki's Matsumoto school. He was a master at demonstrating, through the study of opera aria, that it is primarily the manipulation of tone that creates a moving artistic experience in music. I also remember in my early days with the Suzuki method hearing violin teacher and SAA/ISA representative Paul Landefeld telling a fictional story at a conference about a huge pileup on a rugby field. Nobody could see the ball, and the fans finally got exasperated, yelling, "Forget about the ball, get on with the game!"

> Rhythm and pitch provide the infrastructure into which we pour and manipulate the subtlest element of creating music: tone.

These are all things I could relate to. They communicated the fact that if you fail to keep focused on creating and manipulating a beautiful tone, you've missed the point. This issue of tone is critical no matter what instrument or style of music you play. You cannot be drawn into the more creative aspects of musical expression without being sensitive to the manipulation of tone.

There is, of course, much more to musical expression than just this—manipulation of tone does not take place in a vacuum. I remember watching Johnny Carson interview Itzhak Perlman. Carson asked, "What is the most important element in music?" I leaned forward, expecting to hear "tone!" and was taken aback when I heard Perlman reply, "Rhythm!" If you have ever seen an improvisation between two masters of the Indian tabla, or the virtuoso drummers of Africa and South America, you know that rhythm certainly can stand on its own and move you in a performance. Can we say the same of tone? I think not—rhythm gives music authority, power, and especially order. Without it we have an amorphous mess. There is, however, no winner in the argument of which is more important, tone or rhythm, because we all know that they are inseparable partners in delivering the third component, pitch (which is not an issue for instruments like the piano or guitar).

Infants learn the particular rhythm of their mother tongue, but I believe that a subtler aspect of language acquisition is learning the use of tone to convey meaning. I think that the same is true for appreciating the subtler levels of musical appreciation.

But what about simple, pure tone on an instrument? I will never forget the first time I actually stood close to a violin being played without any other interfering sounds in the room. I was rehearsing with a fellow music student (who later became my wife!) for a piece on my senior recital. I was standing in her small living room when she casually drew the bow across the strings to tune up. I was absolutely stunned by the sheer beauty of her tone. I'm not sure that rhythm can move me similarly. All of this leads me to the conclusion that rhythm and pitch provide the infrastructure into which we pour and manipulate the subtlest element of creating music: tone. So for me, at least within the confines of Western classical music, this particular part of the discussion ends with Dr. Suzuki's focus on tone.

But Music, Tone, and Character Development?

Suzuki talked extensively about the joy and beauty he experienced through music. He even wrote about what he considered a spiritual experience, one of complete transcendence he had as a young man in Berlin listening to a string quartet. He was exuberant about the ability of music, and art in general, to lift man's spirits to experience what many religious people refer to as the "fruit of the Spirit"—love, joy, and peace. Suzuki believed that this experience has a purifying effect on us, a notion that one can find expressed by other masters, as well:

"The longer I live, the more beautiful life becomes. If you foolishly ignore beauty, you will soon find yourself without it. Your life will be impoverished. But if you invest in beauty, it will remain with you all the days of your life."

– Frank Lloyd Wright

I agree with Wright—what you focus your attention on grows. The question remains though: what has the development of the heart to do with our pursuit of creating a beautiful tone on a musical instrument? I believe it can have everything to do with it, or nothing to do with it, depending on our intentions. Dr. Suzuki was emphatic that we are daily making choices that have an effect on the development of character in both ourselves and others, and that there is choice in this regard that is to be made on the level of our intentions. Is my intention in teaching children just to create a living for myself? There's nothing wrong with making a living, but is that all I am holding in that powerful level of my being referred to as "intention"? Am I developing high ability in my students for their benefit, or am I focused primarily on my own self promotion as a teacher? Is the creation and manipulation of beautiful tone a joyful end in itself for me, and a joy to communicate to others, or do I allow it to be appropriated by the ego, either in one-upmanship or in fear of criticism which stifles my ability to share?

It is one thing to enjoy these "fruits of the Spirit" offered by an artistic experience, but can we apply what we have received in this experience to our relationships with others? Suzuki's many personal vignettes in his books imply that we are to do exactly that. His challenge to Suzuki method teachers was to embody all that is best about artistic expression into the art of living and to embrace a common theme that runs through his writings: that we are fundamentally relational beings, and our relationships measure the value of our lives. Suzuki encouraged us, with our power to influence others through our performing and teaching, to embrace our responsibility to uplift others, not to elevate ourselves at the expense of others. Suzuki has staked a claim here, asserting that if our art and profession is to be a worthy one, it must be pursued in service to a goal he summarized as "developing noble character."

The Short Answer

Ultimately, I believe this connection of tone and heart exists only because we say so and because we have decided to commit ourselves to what it implies. It is so because this is where we consistently wrestle our attentions onto our best intentions.

So why "beautiful tone, beautiful heart"? My short answer to the nature of this connection is, "It's a choice." Thankfully, the Suzuki methodology by which we teach is intimately connected to a philosophy that supports the right choice. Right intentions and actions are not established by a single choice made at a single event, but they can be established in a daily discipline of right choices supported by the professional milieu Dr. Suzuki spent a life time cultivating.

Conclusion

I've found that if there is a "spiritual element of music," it is not tone, or rhythm—it is the shared celebration of the joy and dignity that artistic beauty can bring to our lives. The simple pursuit of beautiful tone on our instruments is a unique vehicle that can be elevated, if we so choose, to share the joy and dignity of being human.

"Beautiful tone, beautiful heart" doesn't mean to me that *if* you have a beautiful tone, a beautiful heart will naturally follow. When you look at the whole of Dr. Suzuki's writings, I believe he was saying that pursuing a beautiful

> "This is Suzuki Method: I change myself."

tone is a waste of time if you are not cultivating the heart as well. Dr. Suzuki was always a big-picture communicator. He wanted his teachers not only to reflect on what drew their hearts to music, but to embody that heart reaction into our performance, our teaching, and into all of our relations with others. "Character is an ability" is a basic tenant of the Suzuki method. It involves learning to live with others (sometimes a messy business), and it often requires that we follow an admonition (one of my favorites) he made to a small group of us in his office one day: "This is Suzuki Method: I change myself." We cannot control what nature gives us, or what life has dealt us, but the greater truth that Suzuki demonstrated is that we must lay hold of and put our attention on what we can control. We can strive to create an environment that is characterized by my favorite Suzuki quote (and one that hangs in my living room as a giant *shuji*): "Where love is deep, much can be accomplished." ✺

William Kossler holds BM and MM Guitar Performance degrees from the University of South Carolina and spent one year (1985-86)studying in Japan with Dr. Shinichi Suzuki as a Rotary Scholar. William is a graduate of the Japan Suzuki Institute, a co-author of the Suzuki Guitar Method, and conducts workshops internationally as a Teacher Trainer for the Suzuki Association of the Americas.

Celebrating 45 years of Suzuki History in Guelph, Ontario

by Paule Barsalou

The Beginning

During the school year of 1971–72, a young Guelph mother by the name of Gail Lange started taking her son, Stephen, to a violin teacher working with the Philharmonic Children of Hamilton for Suzuki violin lessons. "I quickly realized that I would never be able to continue that trip!" says Gail. "He [Stephen] was three and Margot [daughter] was eighteen months, and I was a wreck by the time I got to the lesson! I approached the Board to see if they would send someone to Guelph if I found 10 students. They agreed and found Hazel Comer, who was playing in the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra, but who lived in Guelph. In my phone calls looking for students, I happened to phone Daphne Hughes, who said she thought she might be interested in teaching using this method. She then called Hazel, and the two of them went to Tennessee to train with Bill Starr. With the addition of Daphne's own four children we managed to get 20 students to enroll in Guelph under the auspices of the Board of the Philharmonic Children of Hamilton, Ontario."

By the end of the first year (1972–73), Hazel, Daphne and Bill Hughes, and Gail decided to structure the program as its own separate non-profit organization and founded the Suzuki String School of Guelph (SSSG). The Suzuki Method had only been in North America for a few years. Getting Suzuki training wasn't easy, but these ladies' enthusiasm could move mountains. Their first training was life changing, and they became highly committed to bringing the Suzuki Method to Guelph. I doubt they had any clue about what was to come: hundreds of students and their families have been impacted by participating in the SSSG program over the past 45 years. From the very beginning, our vibrant community of teachers and parents has been enthusiastic and committed to developing the potential of every child and enriching our city with beautiful music.

From our humble beginnings we have now grown to 180 students ages three to eighteen studying violin, viola and cello from beginner to university audition level with eight skilled Suzuki teachers. And we are planning to add Suzuki bass to our curriculum in the fall of 2018. We also have a fledgling Suzuki Early Childhood Education program with two teachers. All our classes happen at the Guelph Youth Music Centre. Our mission is: To promote the healthy growth and character development of children through the study, practice, and performance of music. To build a musical connection between the child, the parent, the teacher and the community. To promote the idea that every child can participate and flourish through a musical community.

Excellence

We are committed to providing the best teaching possible, and our teachers are committed to life-long learning. Teaching in one facility together has allowed us to meet regularly as a faculty, both formally and informally to share teaching ideas. The collaborative approach we use as a faculty allows everyone to have a voice. We have a rigorous hiring procedure and our commitment to offering the best working conditions possible and funding for professional development has helped to ensure stability amongst our faculty. Our school is recognized as a shining example of Suzuki teaching in our area and our students are award winners at local and provincial competitions. Some of our graduates pursue music at the university level, are professional musicians and/or Suzuki teachers. Others are amateur musicians, music lovers, and Suzuki parents.

Community

From its very beginning, SSSG has been committed to bringing music to the Guelph community, performing at nursing homes, hospitals, schools, churches, community events, local concert series and fundraisers. In addition, the school has included exchange opportunities in its

curriculum, allowing teenagers to meet their peers in communities across Canada as well as internationally. The SSSG has taken students to the provinces of Newfoundland and Labrador, Quebec, Manitoba, and Alberta, the United States, France, Poland, China, and soon to Spain. SSSG students have also performed three times at the Suzuki Association of the Americas biennial conferences. These exchanges help our students develop great leadership skills and discipline and raise their musicianship both individually and collectively to new heights. They are also a strong incentive for students to remain in our program to the end of high school.

In 1984, we became a registered charity, which gave our board the responsibility of the stewardship of our organization on behalf of our community. This enabled us to do fundraising and set goals for the future. The vision of our board, our artistic directors—Daphne Hughes (1972–1987), Sally Gross (1987–2004), and myself (2004–present)—and our faculty has led us to make major contributions to our community. The Guelph Suzuki String Institute, now the Southwestern Ontario Suzuki Institute, a week-long summer program, began in 1983 and attracts families from many different Suzuki centers to our area.

We are also very proud of our bursary fund, which now gives around $15,000 in bursaries every year. One other major project has had a far-reaching positive effect on our community. From the beginning, private and group lessons were held in many church basements, Sunday school rooms, and school classrooms throughout the city. But in the early 1980s the board started its search for a permanent facility and embarked on a fundraising campaign. This was a major undertaking for such a small music school! As years passed, the dream was kept alive, and bit by bit, funds were raised. By the early '90s, it became apparent that this dream of a facility would better serve our community if it was to welcome not only our own students, but also other youth arts organizations that operate within our city. The Guelph Youth Music Centre was created, and the $300,000 raised towards a building for the SSSG was passed on to this new non-profit charitable organization. In 2001, we finally moved into our new home, a 13,000-square-foot newly-renovated facility that welcomes more than 1,000 students and their families every week.

In recent years, SSSG has embarked on another major fundraising campaign. We have now established the **SSSG Endow ment Fund**. The goal of this fund is to ensure a permanent source of revenue to provide student bursaries and, one day, offer subsidized instrument lessons and/or Suzuki Early Childhood Education classes in an under-served Guelph neighbourhood. Our goal is to raise $1 million.

Our Next Chapter

After decades of effort trying to convince local universities to offer long-term Suzuki teacher training, the SSSG has now decided to make the leap on its own and offer a two-year program in Suzuki pedagogy, starting with offering teacher training in violin in the fall of 2018. This will take advantage of the expertise of SSSG's three SAA Registered Teacher Trainers—Elayne Ras and myself (violin) and David Evenchick (cello)—and of the vast array of lessons available to be observed at all levels in our school. The first year will cover Units One through Four. In second year, we will cover Units Five through Eight and include a Practicum course in which participants will be required to teach beginner private and group lessons, guided by a Teacher Trainer, in the SSSG Start-up Program in an under-served neighborhood of Guelph. We are currently discussing with Wilfrid Laurier University the possibility of allowing their students to get credit for taking the course.

We are looking forward to the future and hope to continue to contribute to the Suzuki and Guelph community for many more decades. ❋

Paule Barsalou, a native of Dunham, QC, holds a BA in music performance from Laval University (QC) and an MA in performance and Suzuki pedagogy from the Cleveland Institute of Music (OH). Her main teachers and mentors have been Michele Higa George, Daphne Hughes, David Cerone, Kathleen Winkler, and Gyorgy Terebesi. Ms. Barsalou is an SAA Registered Teacher Trainer. Since 1989 she has been teaching at the Suzuki String School of Guelph in Guelph, ON, and is now the artistic director of the school. She is a guest teacher at institutes and workshops throughout Canada and adjudicates at music festivals in Ontario. She is the principle second violin of the Guelph Symphony Orchestra. Ms. Barsalou collaborates with journaling expert Christie Zimmer in developing materials, videos and parent workshops around the use of reflective note taking in the study of music.

The Hamilton Suzuki School of Music Celebrates 50 years

By Denise Rollason

On September 23, 2017, a wonderful celebration took place as the Hamilton Suzuki School of Music recognized **50 years** of Suzuki education in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.

In 1967, the Women's Committee of the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra was looking for a meaningful way to recognize Canada's Centennial. Intrigued by information about "a new approach to music education," its members contacted Dr. Suzuki in Japan and after much discussion decided that this was just the project they were searching for. Arrangements were made to invite a Japanese teacher, recommended by Dr. Suzuki, to move to Canada to train local Canadian teachers and to teach beginning violin students.

Akiko Takubo arrived first, followed a year later by Keiko Yamada. The first steps in creating a Suzuki School in Hamilton were taken.

Hamilton Suzuki School of Music students perform a community concert in a local church. In conjunction with their 50th Anniversary Celebration, HSSM set a goal of performing 50 community concerts in one year and totaled 54 concerts.

In 2017, current students, teachers and friends gathered at an open house at HSSM with members of the original committee to recognize the program's beginnings and its fascinating journey.

Founding members arrived not only with wonderful stories around how it all began but with amazing gifts from Akiko and Keiko that they had treasured for 50 years. They included pristine hand painted Christmas cards, a beautiful decorative fan and two original watercolors painted by Dr. Suzuki himself. Everyone was awed and excited by these treasures and the 50 years of history they represented. The founders then told us that they were passing on the gifts to the HSSM to exhibit. They are now proudly displayed at the school and are a wonderful jumping off point for informal Suzuki education discussions with new parents.

They also brought along photographs of the original students with their Japanese teachers and one of a student with Dr. Suzuki himself. These were added to the display of archives collected over 50 years and former students delighted in looking for their younger selves in the many photo albums on display.

The HSSM is the direct descendent of the original project, however it needed to be recognized that this was all started by the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra. A Committee with representatives of the HSSM and HPO was formed and collaboration began. It was decided that as September 23, the date of the HSSM Open House, just happened to be the date HPO's Season Opener, what better than to have an ensemble of young Suzuki students give a surprise "pop-up" concert prior to the performance. The school, of course, has grown over the past 50 years so the young performers not only represented Suzuki violin but also, cello, piano, harp, flute, and classical guitar. It was a thrilling opportunity for these young performers. In fact, they did so well they were invited to play again at the following HPO concert.

The 50 year celebration was a wonderful way to connect the old with the new, to hear from former students about their fond memories of the school and for beginning students to see all that came before and the possibilities ahead. And so, the next 50 year journey begins!

Denise Rollason began her association with the Hamilton Suzuki School of Music as a parent in 1978. She was a member of the HSSM Parents' Association Executive committee for many years before taking on the role of administrative assistant to the school's director. Her position with the school grew over the past 40 years and she now acts as Operations Manager, overseeing the finances and day to day operation of the school and its facility. Denise is a passionate supporter of Suzuki education.

Host a SPA course

in the 2018-2019 academic year!

Suzuki Principles in Action (SPA) is a course designed to help teachers incorporate Suzuki's principles effectively in their teaching. The course focuses on **how to teach, not what to teach**. It allows for the sharing of ideas among all instrument areas. SPA is based on Dr. Suzuki's belief that knowledge is an important first step, but "knowledge plus 10,000 times" is what produces ability. This important principle, which teachers frequently explain to their students, applies equally to the art of teaching.

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Alston-Buck: Kid, Accidental Activist

Interviewed by Marion Goodrich

Ericka Alston-Buck created the nationally recognized Kids Safe Zone, located in a distressed West Baltimore community known as Sandtown-Winchester. For nearly three years, she served as its director. A proud Suzuki kid, Alston-Buck calls herself an "accidental activist." The reason why is rooted in the events leading to the founding of the Kids Safe Zone.

In April 2015, Alston-Buck was one month into her job as public relations director for Penn North Community Resource Center when Baltimore erupted following the death of a Sandtown-Winchester resident, Freddie Gray. Gray had died from severe spinal cord injuries sustained while riding in a police van. The neighborhood was at the center of the turmoil, which compounded the lack of resources for its children.

> "Teaching music is not my main purpose. I want to make good citizens." – *Shinichi Suzuki*

Within five weeks, Alston-Buck conceived of and brought into being The Kids Safe Zone. Its first day, 40 children came. By the next week, that number quadrupled. Now, children ages 5 to 17 still come from across this large community to do what most children can do at home: feel safe, and be a kid.

Excerpts from an interview of Ms. Alston-Buck follow.

When we were introduced to each other, the first thing you let me know about yourself is that you are a Suzuki kid.

Yes, and how cool is that?

What was being a Suzuki kid like for you?

I was the type of kid we serve at the Kids Safe Zone. I grew up in a household with a smart single mom, who used her Section 8 voucher to move us to a neighborhood with good schools. Our school was culturally aware; we visited all of the city's major performance halls. What happened to impress me the most was seeing Black violinists. I remember thinking: "Wow, we can do that!"

Mom made sure we signed up for every after-school program offered and then supported us. When I was in third grade, I enrolled in our school's new Suzuki program and brought home a violin. Right away, Mom encouraged my practicing throughout the house, at all times. I'm 46 years old, and still remember my attachment to Long, Long Ago. I'd make up lyrics while listening to the recording. That made it real to me.

What did you like best about that experience?

Time with my teacher; being with my violin and the music. Any time I was there, I didn't have to deal with the wolves. And there were a lot [of wolves]. The most important thing was being able to escape, and let the music take me anywhere. It's the reason why I encourage music and reading at the Kids Safe Zone. For kids that are in turmoil, these are ways to escape.

What did you like the least?

You know, I liked everything about it.

"If you think of something, do it."

What did it provide you, viewing from your perspective now?

You grow to understand the need to give things a chance. When you think about it, there are a lot of skills involved that a kid can take with them into adulthood. An important thing given: the opportunity to be fearless and to learn something different.

How did the Kids Safe Zone come into being? Is there a dominant thought or impression that served to galvanize you into creating it?

During the uprising, everyone kept hearing that there were limited resources for children in this huge community of 72 blocks. And it was true. What's also true it that I was sitting back, thinking, "It's unbelievable that these kids don't have an outlet. Someone should do something." Eventually came the realization, "Oh, *I'm* the one who should be doing something!"

I approached my director, who handed me the key to a vacant laundromat. Once I got to the building and stood in the middle of that empty space, I let go of the notion "we" meant "everybody else."

What public relations directors do is write press releases: *Penn-North is opening a "Kids Safe Zone" on June 1. We will have organized sports; arts; field trips; swimming; a craft center; a tech center; a computer lab. . .* Just typing away about what this place that didn't exist yet was going to have. *In five weeks, the "Kids Safe Zone" will be here for any child between the ages of five and seventeen, seven days a week, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. And we will have all of the cool stuff.* That went to all local TV stations and the Baltimore Sun.

I rolled back my chair from the desk and said to myself, "Hmm. I guess you've got to make that happen." So, next was going to social media: "Hey! We need paint, carpet, computers, games, your time, your talent!" People started showing up. They still show up. We're powered by volunteers and donations. And every day, kids still come here. Yes, there is yelling, kicking, screaming. . . it's also the place where you'll get the most hugs ever. There's a beautiful something in the chaos. Instead of a "facility" or "institution," we've created the coolest house on the block.

It's been three eventful years. As their Safe Zone director, what is, in your opinion, most essential for these children?

Because this program was born in the era of Black Lives Matter, it was very important not to have it reduced to a hashtag or t-shirt. We wanted a place where they could feel safe, nurtured,

"Create the best possible environment."
–Shinichi Suzuki

and encouraged. The Kids Safe Zone offers a chance to adapt to that better environment. My goal is to cultivate their value. I want every child to know they are worthy. I need them to know they deserve whatever good thing they envision or dream or feel, regardless of Mom's tax bracket or zip code. And these kids *are* having experiences that encourage them to think, "I am worthy, and can receive these good things." That's why we're here.

You have said you want the Kids Safe Zone to be a normal, everyday thing for neighborhood children. What is a typical day here like?

A typical day here is like a typical day for any mom: controlled chaos.

In the summer, we open at 8 a.m. And there are kids standing outside before then, waiting. At the top of the morning schedule is "Mindful Moments," with deep breathing exercises. Our day starts out very calm intentionally because we don't know what our children deal with at home. Later in the morning we have group reading time; everyone is also encouraged to read on their own throughout the day.

We're in a food desert, and the kids' diets reflect that. So, they are fed healthy food while they're here, and we keep them moving. I fought tooth and nail to get the basketball court and playground across the street refurbished; we're out on them all of the time. In the summer, our kids go swimming at the local pool. There's also a yoga class every day. Any kid here from five years old up can conduct a full class. . . that is awesome to watch! We have group game time, which helps cultivate the family setting and "cool house" vibe.

What you won't see is a big sister having to be a big sister. We make sure this is an environment where a kid can just be a kid. For instance, we separate group activities by age range, to interrupt the five- and six-year-olds' habit of going to big brother or sister for everything. I don't care if you have to cook dinner for your younger siblings when you get home. Here, you get to be twelve years old.

We do see unacceptable behavior, so there's time out. Time-outs look like reading nooks. They have to read a book, and then they have to tell me or another staff member what the book was about (it's okay if they just look at the pictures). Afterwards, they'll be re-directed, because we understand kids do what they see.

Every child has an "I'm So Awesome" check-off list, where our seven staff members tell each child something cool they've noticed about them. Every child also has to get seven hugs. Kids hang around my office door, just looking at me. I ask, "What do you want?" They say, "Can I have a hug?" They're checking off their hugs.

"Action cannot be separated from thought."
– Shinichi Suzuki

I recently had surgery and yesterday was my first day back. I got a little of everything: complaining, resistance, tears. But, going again to the experience in a Suzuki program, I encourage every kid to give things a chance. Maybe when they're 20 years old, they'll think, "I remember when they made me jump on a pogo stick at the Kids Safe Zone. I didn't want to, but I found out it was pretty cool in the end."

What here gives you the most satisfaction?

I am most satisfied with two things: First, knowing that from the time I get here to the time I leave, 100 kids are safe. Second, watching our murder rate climb without having to go to a funeral or crime scene. Our reality is, hundreds of people die from violence here every year. A lot of them are from this neighborhood.

What would you like to change?

There would be no need for the Kids Safe Zone, because kids would be safe everywhere.

Any final thoughts?

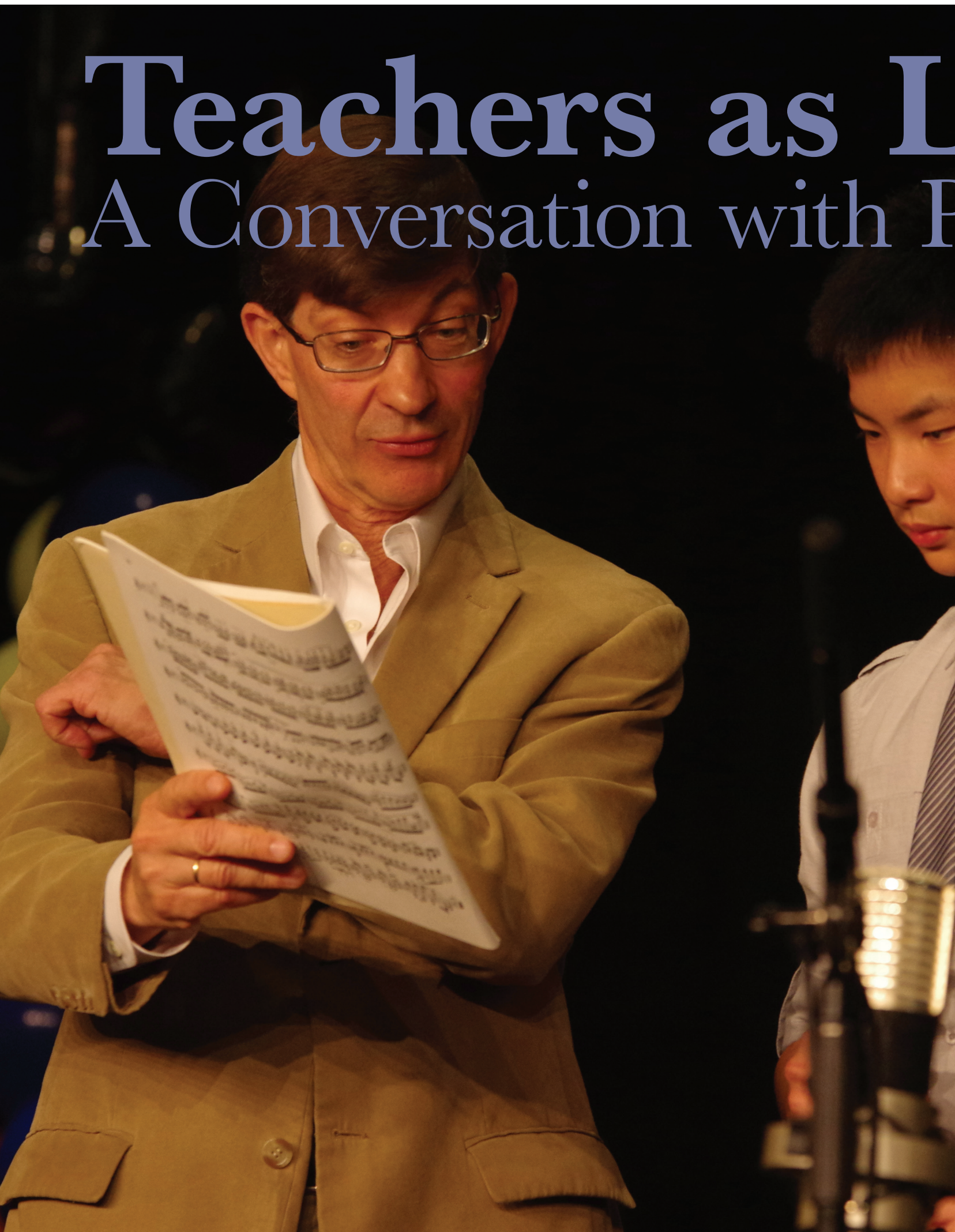
This wasn't intentional. I never set out to do this. But now, there's nothing else in the world I see myself doing. ✹

In January of this year, Ms. Alston-Buck left daily operation of the Kids Safe Zone. At the request of Mayor Catherine Pugh, she will be working to bring centers modeled after the Kids Safe Zone to other communities throughout the City of Baltimore.

Marion Goodrich lives in Baltimore with her husband and two children, and runs Bmore Twinklers, a private studio. She grew up as a Suzuki student at the Preucil School of Music, studying with Doris Preucil. Marion is a graduate of the Cleveland Institute of Music, where she received long-term Suzuki pedagogy training. Over two decades of being both a teacher and musician have brought many learning opportunities. Best of all are the students and colleagues; Suzuki kids old and young. It is a privilege to work with them, and learn from them. Lastly, being a Suzuki parent to daughter Olivia and son Julien is a wonderful, interesting way to have the good fortune of being able to experience all three corners of the Suzuki triangle!

Teachers as L

A Conversation with P



Leaders
Paul Kantor

Interviewed by Oscar Soler

Paul Kantor is currently the Sally Shepherd Perkins Professor of Violin at the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University having previously served as the Eleanor H. Biggs Distinguished Professor of Violin at the Cleveland Institute of Music. He received his bachelor of music and master of music degrees from the Juilliard studying violin with Dorothy DeLay and chamber music with Robert Mann. For 13 years he served as Chair of the String Department at the University of Michigan and has taught at the Juilliard School, the New England Conservatory, and Yale University. He continues as Artist in Residence at the Glenn Gould School of Music/Royal Conservatory of Music since his appointment in 2008. Along with his son, violinist Timothy Kantor, he founded and directs the Gabriel Del Orbe Violin Program in the Dominican Republic.

Additionally, he has presented masterclasses at the Starling-Delay Symposium, Indiana University, the Eastman School, the University of Southern California, and the New World Symphony, among others. His students consistently win major awards at important violin competitions including the Indianapolis, Montreal, Stulberg, Buenos Aires, Klein, and Fischoff.

For the past 37 years, he has been on the Artist/Faculty of the Aspen Music Festival and School where he has been concertmaster of both the Festival Orchestra and the Chamber Symphony. He has performed as soloist with numerous symphony orchestras as well as serving as concertmaster of the New Haven Symphony, the Lausanne Chamber Orchestra and the Great Lakes Festival Orchestra. Kantor was a member of the New York and Lenox string quartets, the Berkshire Chamber Players and the National Musical Arts Chamber Ensemble in Washington, DC.

Mr. Kantor has performed the world premieres of Dan Welcher's Violin Concerto (subsequently recorded with Larry Rachleff and Symphony II) as well as John Corigliano's "Red Violin Caprices." His recordings can be found on the labels of Equilibrium, CRI, Delos and Mark Records. In 2014 he was honored with the Artist Teacher Award from the American String Teachers Association.

He is married to pianist Virginia Weckstrom.

What projects are you involved with at the moment?

Like most musicians these days, there are many projects going on simultaneously. My principal work is at the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University. I also teach at the Glenn Gould School in Toronto with my colleague Barry Shiffman, and share teaching responsibilities with my son,

One hopes that education also accepts the responsibility to lead in our society. The study of music is so much more than just vocational training for the relatively few individuals who become professionals.

Timothy Kantor, through the Gabriel del Orbe Violin Program in the Dominican Republic.

When did the school at the Dominican Republic get started? What prompted you to teach these young students at the Dominican Republic?

The school started in 2012, and I became involved through Antonio Pompa-Baldi. He is a colleague at the Cleveland Institute of Music, where I was teaching at the time. Over lunch, he described the program which, at the time, was exclusively dedicated to piano instruction. He asked if I would have interest in this. Although I was very busy at the time, the mission and goals of the organization sounded intriguing. Run by a wonderful philanthropist and musician; Margarita Auffant has dedicated herself to promoting classical music education in the Dominican Republic. Many conversations later and following a site visit and auditions, we were convinced of the potential there. Selfishly, the opportunity to work on this project with my son made it irresistible! We created a violin program, added chamber music opportunities, and plan to launch a cello program next year. The students also perform at concerts in Santo Domingo twice per year in June and during Christmas time.

These kids are so fortunate to have you. I can only imagine how much you are giving to them, the conditions in which these kids live on a daily basis! What a wonderful opportunity. I am sure they are floored to have your guidance and expertise.

These kids live in a challenging environment, most with minimal financial resources. The Foundation has been able to provide very good student instruments. Additionally, a sizable chamber music library was donated by Shar Products. The students have a beautiful passion for music, and it is clearly a meaningful and central part of their lives. We already have three graduates who are furthering their music studies in the US. I know that I can speak for Tim as well, that being part of the growth of classical music education in the Republic is energizing and inspiring.

Tell us what is the most satisfying aspect of your career?

I think my greatest satisfaction comes from seeing students succeed; there is nothing like it in my experience. Certainly, success can mean many things. It can be as simple as participating and witnessing as someone understands and embraces a concept that is new to him. Success can also be a landmark achievement. For example, I recently had a student who "discovered" and decided to champion the Einojuhani Rautavaara concerto. This piece was certainly not in my repertoire, in fact, I barely knew of its existence! After dedicating herself fully to learning the work, she entered the concerto competition with that piece, played three rounds, and was the last person standing. To see her exceptional commitment, and the achievement that resulted, is wonderful for her, but perhaps even more so for me.

I think everyone will certainly relate to your feeling. I think that is the reason why most of us teach. In your view, how is music education affecting the music industry?

That is such a good question. At this point, I tend to say that the relationship is perhaps the other way around. Of course, education always has an impact, but what I see in most universities and conservatories is more reactionary. Students, teachers, and administrators are thinking about what type of work is, and will be, available and what skills are required to succeed. I think that response is reasonable and yet, one hopes that education also accepts the responsibility to lead in our society. The study of music is so much more than just vocational training for the relatively few individuals who become professionals. It is also more than the tangential benefits touted for learning math or history. The study of music quite simply is its own reward that enables people to lead more nuanced and fulfilled lives.

It is really interesting, and you are absolutely right. In some ways, the music industry is making us realize how we can educate our kids at any level. We are thinking about what we can do for our students so they have a valuable, effective, and successful life. What trends do you see in music education?

First, the good news: the quality of music teaching I see at every level seems to be on an upward trajectory. Music education is improving by leaps and bounds. My impression is that the teaching profession has become far more creative and there is far less rote learning. That's the good news, and the result is that the quality of playing is often quite extraordinary.

The less good news, even as I understand why it exists, is that there isn't yet the full appreciation that you don't have to be a professional musician in order to benefit from music education.

You are talking about not only the scope of learning materials, but also the nature that motivates us to teach. Do I understand that correctly?

I wasn't going exactly there, but I understand your point. It is often worth learning something even if you do not know where you are going to use it in your profession. You might learn a piece of music or a skill, and

> The simple, big idea that parents and children should learn together was, in retrospect, so obvious but in its elaboration, so ingenious. How did we ever think that was not the goal?

even though you may never use it to earn an income, it somehow becomes part of your broader understanding. Very often you end up using it without even knowing that you are using it. I am making the argument that we do not want to turn our schools, at any level, into just trade schools. Music is not the only field that suffers from this trend. There is such economic pressure to succeed, to support a family, to pay for education, to pay for your children's education, that it's an easy tendency to understand.

Yes, learning for the sake of learning.

There is certainly a balance that can be struck, but for the joy of it. It is not something that is frivolous, but that feeds the musician, the society and creativity in general.

That is important. How do you think Suzuki music education has changed the music industry?

The impact of Suzuki music education is undeniable. In many ways, Suzuki education stepped into the void left by the lack of public school music education. Suzuki education was there when the role of public schools was diminished. I cannot imagine what we would have done without Suzuki education; we would have been back to the dark ages in some ways. The simple, big idea that parents and children should learn together was, in retrospect, so obvious but in its elaboration, so ingenious. How did we ever think that was not the goal? This may be one of the greatest contributions of the Suzuki method: not just playing the violin or playing the violin better, but the interaction of children and their parents, and the parents' involvement in their children's education.

In my view, the idea that teaching a child without the pressure that he would have to become a professional violinist was liberating. I was able to think about how music shapes someone's life, and how music helps that family grow in the direction they desire. That is one of the most powerful principles of the Suzuki method.

I also admire that the Suzuki method has not only the intensity of the private lesson, but also the community of the group class. It is such a healthy educational model, but also a societal model of being one of the community while simultaneously respecting the contributions of the individual.

Absolutely. Every Suzuki teacher who reads this interview will agree with you.

I will tell you a story I don't think my son will mind me sharing. Both my children studied with Suzuki teachers for quite a while when we first began. My daughter, who is older and started musical studies first, was not the slightest bit intrigued by the violin. One day, she threw the violin at her teacher, and said, "Oh, I have a brother, and he can take the rest of the lessons." She was three-and-a-half years old at the time. My son was blindsided by it, but decided to give it a try. My first reaction when he first started was, "Oh my god, he is so untalented. How can this be?" The Suzuki teacher, a wise lady named Judy Blank, smiled in response and said, "You'll see," and I most certainly have!

The potential for student development is unbelievable, and the idea that you do not give up on people is powerful. In our personal arrogance, we think we know where things are headed, but we simply do not. I have been reminded often that the people who I imagine are going straight to the top do not end up doing that at all. Also, the people who make you wonder, "Why can't they learn this?

Continued on p. 40

> I learned from [Miss Delay] that we teach a student violin and music, but more truthfully, we use the instrument and subject to teach the person. Therefore, you have to have sensitivity to people, and a way to motivate them. You also need to know the material really well to be able to use it as a vehicle.

Setting the Tone of the Lesson Using Tonalization

by MaryLou Roberts

It's the classic question: "If I spend 5–10 minutes on Tonalization with my students, that is 5–10 minutes less time on their repertoire. I think the parent and child may worry they won't have time to get to the newest piece. It seems like there just isn't enough time."

How does Tonalization work to encourage more progress and better results? How can we communicate with parents and students not to hurry on to the new piece? What is a good lesson format to ensure everything supports motivated learning? How much is too much for the student's current ability?

Let's begin with Dr. Suzuki's description of the term and how it came to be:

> The research and teaching of vocalization is the most important aspect of vocal music. It is said that the quality of teaching of vocalization shows the quality, whether superior or inferior, of the teacher. Since I noticed this some time ago, I have been applying the idea to my violin teaching. Now I usually spend the first half of my individual lesson period each time on teaching the very basic techniques on how to produce beautiful and noble tone on the instrument, just as vocal music teachers do on vocalization. After that I give my student his lesson on the piece of music he is studying.
>
> In vocal music teaching Vocalization is a technical term producing a beautiful voice, and the teaching method for it is established. We had no equivalent term, nor method for beautiful sound production from an instrument. However, I proposed to teacher of the Suzuki Method in the States that we should establish such a teaching method to produce beautiful tone and we should give it an appropriate name. Then they molded the new term, Tonalization. Since then I have been fond of using "tonalization," and I am emphasizing how to practice and teach beautiful tone production.
>
> I have offered to the teachers in Japan what I have researched and developed on this subject. Now they also are teaching Tonalization to their students... I hope from the bottom of my heart that a finer method of teaching Tonalization—one that will be the finest—will be established as soon as possible through exchanging better ideas about it between teachers in the world and through cooperative studies on this subject... Students learning from teachers who have profoundly researched Tonalization are all gaining excellent performance ability. It is very important for teacher to develop their students' abilities by teaching them how to produce correct and beautiful tone on the strings from the beginning of their learning.[1]

I find it fascinating to read some of these original articles. Teachers all worked together to produce this term, and we may use it many times without explaining it to our students and parents! The first point in teaching tone in the lesson is to describe the term so that parents understand why tonalization begins the lesson, rather than going through lots of repertoire. If the "why" is understood, there will be more follow-through at home.

When teachers demonstrate a new idea about playing our instruments, we demonstrate the need for each aspect of producing tone. Each new idea needs a few minutes to be described, demonstrated, and repeated sufficiently in order to produce results that the child accomplish and the parent can hear. This acts as a calming activity and helps the focus continue later on. The whole lesson is affected. That new idea can be taken in to the review repertoire and immediately applied. Teachers can help make this application process more effective; parents may not have the knowledge to do this. I find that the skill in Tonalization is incorporated at a much faster rate if time is spent in the lesson applying the new skill to a piece. If it is too difficult for the student at the moment, there will be partial victories to point out, ones that parents may easily miss. This idea of taking time to help with application of Tonalization is critical to pointing out the need and benefit of Tonalization. It also facilitates meaningful progress.

Finding new ways to present ideas on tone keeps us motivated as teachers and performers. Creativity in the process is always interesting and new. Some people use mental images or pictures, some use descriptive language, maybe a technical point, sometimes a drawing of the fingers or strings—all these ideas communicate to the student in different ways.

In teaching tone on the guitar, the point where the nail and fingertip touch the string makes a big difference in tone quality. Too far away from the nail will produce sounds that are not connected, because the contact has too much resistance on the finger tip. Playing on the hard surface of the nail directly will produce a clicking or buzzing sound. I teach playing on the skin right next to the nail as part of Tonalization. I might describe the point with a picture of a giant fingertip. I then might use touch on the students'

fingertip, have the parent also touch on their fingertip, demonstrate the difference, and then help the student be successful at that point. It will need repetition in order to stick, so of course it initially takes more time, but in the follow up lessons afterward, reinforcing the idea on a regular basis takes only a few minutes. Each instrument will have specific isolated ideas like this that can be incorporated in to the lesson.

Achieving the result is the first step, which involves all our skills learned in training and by our own experimentation.

Hearing the result is the second step; can the parent and child tell the difference?

Then knowing how to duplicate it using language the child understands so success is experienced in the lesson is the third step.

Giving the parent a summary to write in the lesson notes or even a turn trying out the new idea will help skills continue to strengthen at home practices.

Then use the new idea in an easy review piece. If it is not possible, the step is too large; make it smaller.

By applying Tonalization skill to repertoire in the lesson, we demonstrate the beauty of our instrument, make the review pieces sound better, and help the student apply the new skill. There is an immediate growth and appreciation, and focus will be set to move on to the newer repertoire.

This process keeps the review pieces growing in tone, musicality and technique. This is where it becomes practical; I find that parents follow through much better and progress is actually faster. There will be signs of progress to point out, and this is very important. People all over the world are busy, and if we as teachers demonstrate the need for the change in Tonalization, progress will take place naturally. In this way, Tonalization is essential to a continually motivating progress.

There are Tonalizations for Pre-Twinkle stages as well. In guitar, the arm and wrist are of utmost importance. Stroke direction can be set early on, and the accompanying relaxation will produce better and faster results down the road. This kind of early progress is essential to establishing a student as a musician. Teaching the parent these small skills with details the child needs but doesn't have patience for, and how to achieve results are best taught to the parent during the part of the lesson when the child may need a break. The parent may not actually perform or play an entire piece, but they can demonstrate angle, arm balance, or string placement (use other ideas for your instrument). I have found that the results the following week are much better when the parent has this kind of small hands on experience. This helps avoid having to fix the technique in the following lesson. Direct experience by the parent helps them correct gently with the child because they quickly realize how difficult drawing the tone from an instrument can be, and how rewarding it is when you hear success! ❋

Notes

1. Shinichi Suzuki: His Speeches and Essays (Secaucus, New Jersey: Summy-Birchard, 1989), 15-17.

The Suzuki Method is not a fixed method, but is continuously progressing day by day. It is seeking better and newer ways to develop children's abilities to a much higher level in a joyous natural atmospher in the easiest way possible. Every child can be well educated. Every child has such wonderful potential and powerful "life force" within. Now, teachers from all over the world, let us study together how to nurture our children correctly and how to develop their abilities to the most splendid level." –Shinichi Suzuki

MaryLou Roberts teaches Suzuki Guitar in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and is Coordinator of the Ann Arbor Suzuki Institute. Since becoming a Teacher Trainer for the SAA in 2006, and the ESA in 2012, she has offered courses in the US, Ireland, the UK, South America, Australia and Mexico. MM Cleveland Institute of Music; graduate studies with John Holmquist and Gilbert Biberian.

Principles Not Rules

A tribute to John Kendall on his 100th birthday

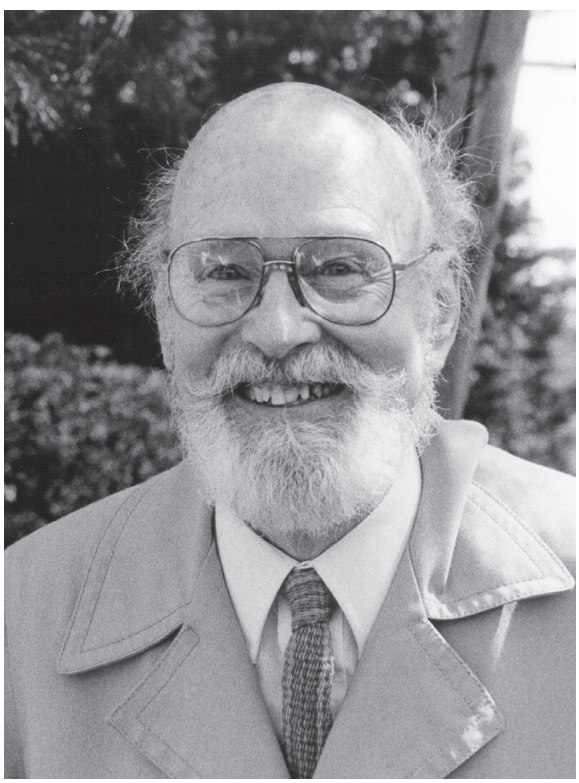
By Moshe Neuman

John Kendall (1917–2011) was my mentor during three most exciting and fulfilling years (1980–1983), when I was a graduate assistant of his at Southern Illinois University in Edwardsville, IL.

At a reunion held at one of the SAA conferences a few years back, several of his graduates gathered to honor him and share a moment or memory, etc. When my turn came, I opened with an apology: "I have only three words to say: Principles not Rules." That is what I learned from this wise, innovative, and loving man.

As a teacher trainer, I apply this idea endlessly, as it is my strong belief that teachers should not only know *what* to teach, *how* to teach, and *when* to teach it, but also *why* we do it a certain way with a specific student on a given day.

Many times, people ask for so-called "recipes" of how to teach, and I try instead to share with them the principle behind the specific exercise, game or idea.



Ask, Don't Tell

John Kendall was an advocate of using mottos. Over the years I have adopted quite a few and added my own.

One of his favorites was "Ask, Don't Tell!"

Nobody likes to be told what to do. I once read a recommendation for couples: instead of, "You forgot the garbage again," try, "Honey, whose turn is it to take out the garbage this week?"

One of my favorite examples for using this idea is in helping a student with their bow hold. Many teachers use finger names such as "Ms. Round Pinky." By asking, "What is pinky's full name?" we let the student curve it and thus relax their pinky by themselves, without us having to badger over and over. More importantly, if we can suggest to parents to use that principle in working with their child, it will help significantly in reducing conflict and tension.

Create a "Can't Fail" Environment

Most Suzuki violin teachers use a foot chart for beginning students. I use them mostly with pre-schoolers. This is a piece of cardboard on which the teacher draws around their feet to enhance good posture which starts with "rest position feet" and "playing feet" drawn with different color markers. By asking the young student to place their feet inside the drawings, perhaps using a game such as marching around the room while the Suzuki CD is playing in the background and hopping onto the foot chart when the music stops, we make sure that our students develop a well-balanced stance.

Patterning students' rhythmic motion of their lower arm as it opens and closes to produce the first Twinkle variation, "Taka Taka Stop Stop," is another great example where we can create a "can't fail" environment. While many teachers use "my turn, your turn" as they guide the child's bow on the string, it is certainly not sufficient in most cases, as many children are apt to use their whole arm instead of the desired motion, thus developing a bad habit of playing with a "crooked bow" (not parallel to the bridge).

Implementing a "can't fail" strategy, we may ask the child to sit or kneel down with their left hand resting on their left knee and "soap their arm" with an imaginary soap moving their right hand from the elbow to the wrist of their left arm in a rhythmic fashion saying "taka taka stop stop" or making up words to this rhythm. This game, as we introduce it to our young students, forces them to open and close their elbow, thus reinforcing the desired motion of playing with a beautiful tone in the middle of the bow.

Big Muscles First

This principle is related to the physiology of violin playing.

Generally speaking, we train our students to play violin with their whole body, planting their feet solidly, soft knees, straight torso, relaxed neck, etc. We teach "string platforms" which we change with our whole arm and opening and closing the elbow for basic movement for beginners. Later on we teach hand motion, often referred to as wrist motion (I prefer "hand motion" because the hand is actually moving while the wrist is only the hinge). Last in this sequence is the finger action for smooth bow changes and for string crossing at the frog of the bow.

Working on such finger action for breaking the chord at the beginning of Bach Bourrée (end of Book Three), I often remind my students how "picky we were with our pinky" as beginners, and now they may reap the fruits of their labor. In some cases, we may not have been picky enough and need to further invent new, advanced ways of strengthening this ability. For example, "push-ups on the bridge" with the bow on the bridge at the frog moving your bow from G string (fingers as curved as possible) to E string with pinky actually straightening.

Remembering the sequence of "big muscles first" will reinforce their development and make it easier to train the smaller muscles once the big muscles have become the primary functional ones.

Look for Extremes

"When do you teach note reading?" is a question that usually comes up during training for Units One through Three, once we have covered the endless specific teaching ideas of each piece in the book.

A principle I have learned from Mr. Kendall is to look for extremes. If your student is under 6 years old, or in early Book One, is not yet reading books in their mother tongue, or has no interest in learning to read music notes, perhaps it is too early.

On the other hand, I remember an advanced student many years ago at a Suzuki workshop, playing a Book Eight piece which had a misprint in it. The masterclass teacher was trying to help the student fix that note, but had no way of relating to the music notes as the student could not read music at all.

Being aware of extreme situations helps us as teachers best address our students' needs at the most appropriate time and manner.

Be Your Own Sevcik

Joe Kaminsky, in his article "Our Colleagues' Memories Live On" (ASJ Volume 43 #1), shares how Mr. Kendall has taught so many of us how to "Be Your Own Sevcik." We as teachers have the opportunity to guide our students to practice effectively by teaching them to become their own teachers! Ultimately, that should be one of a teacher's most primary goals.

Along this journey, we may provide endless ways of simplifying "magic spots" in the pieces. Playing open strings at the opening two measures of Minuet 2—D-A-A-E-A-E-E-D-D—is an example of such an exercise we teach our students as they work on string crossing. I often ask them to walk around the room or answer my questions as they keep repeating this pattern over and over, thus building their ability, as says Dr. Suzuki: Ability = Knowledge + 10,000 Times! ❋

Many times, people ask for so-called "recipes" of how to teach, and I try instead to share with them the principle behind the specific exercise, game or idea.

Moshe Neumann was a graduate assistant to John Kendall at SIUE, Edwardsville, IL, where he received his MMus with Suzuki pedagogy emphasis. He received his BMus from Tel-Aviv University and trained with Dr. Suzuki in Japan in 1984. Moshe is a Registered Teacher Trainer with the SAA since 1984 and has trained teachers and students in numerous Suzuki workshops in the US, France, and Israel. He was director of Suzuki programs in Macomb, IL, and Cincinnati, OH. Mr. Neumann has been teaching Suzuki violin for 40 years. He has developed programs of Arab-Jewish cooperation through music in three locations in Israel over the years. Moshe is married to Lily, Suzuki piano teacher. They have a son living in Peru and a daughter living in the US, both who were Suzuki students.

What is Practicing?

A guide for parents

by Sachiko Isihara

Have you ever thought about this question: What is practicing supposed to be, really? As a new parent, have you asked yourself, "How am I supposed to guide practicing at home?" A good question. You might think that how you practice depends upon the level of the student, but there are some fundamental ideas to home practice that apply to any level.

Step One: Listening

For the musician, the most important part of practicing is engaging their own hearing in the process. A proper warm-up isn't really about getting the fingers moving, but actually getting the ears "warmed up" to listen for good tone, good phrasing, and the character of the music that is coming out of the instrument. If you do not pay attention to what you hear, then you might be playing wrong notes, or have the phrasing all off, or not have the dynamics in the right place. If you really listen, you can hear the difference in a down bow stroke or an up. To practice successfully, it is important to develop the ear. That is why it is so important to listen to the recording every day and to listen to excellent musicians in any context.

A strong fundamental of practicing is "success equals success." That is, when you practice, you must consider working in small steps so that you can do something successfully. For our students, the Suzuki teacher often assigns "practice spots," which are these small steps that should be repeated at home. It does not make sense to repeat over and over anything with mistakes in it.

If there are mistakes, consider further breaking down the area to be practiced so that each part can be successfully played. Repeating something that can be successfully played is good practicing. Practicing with mistakes often means you are only getting better at making mistakes. We like to use the formula "small steps times repetition equals success." Dr. Suzuki said it takes 10,000 repetitions to transform something that you can do with thoughtful concentration to something effortless and natural. He calls this developing extreme ability.

As the adage goes, "Don't practice until you don't make a mistake. Practice until you can't make a mistake." Small successful repetitions over and over make for many small successes. And what better way to practice than to build upon many small successes until a much greater success has been achieved?

Step Two: Deep Learning

First I mentioned that practicing is based upon engaging our hearing and successfully repeating small portions of a piece until they become completely natural and effortless.

In this step, I would like to present the "three layers of learning." When I studied in Matsumoto, Japan to become a Suzuki piano teacher, the teacher trainer Dr. Haruko Kataoka would say, "Learning is a deep thing, not a broad thing." This is an important statement because it embodies the way we use the Suzuki approach to learning music and can be interpreted and applied to any subject. I conceive the depth inherent in learning a piece of music in terms of three levels:

Level One: The ability to play the notes, correct rhythms and fingerings, and basic technique (such as bowings) until a student can play the notes fluently in a steady tempo.

Level Two: The ability to play the piece with more advanced techniques leading to better phrasing, tone color, and nuances. For a pianist this might be use of the pedals. For the string player it might use of vibrato.

Level Three: The ability to play with artistry and with personal expression. This includes creating an atmosphere or "story" through the way it is performed.

Sometimes a student comes to the lesson and plays the piece on which they are working in a very competent manner. All the notes are learned and the piece is fluently executed with little or no wrong notes. Everyone is proud and happy at this level of playing. Then, I ask the student, "If you were me, the teacher, what do you think I should say to you next?" The student often says that I should tell them to go on to the next piece! Yes, we are all eager to move and get farther along in the Suzuki books. But, according to my feeling that music should be deep learning, I will say, "You have done a great job at Level One on this piece. You know all the notes and you are playing them quite well. But now let's go on to the Level Two: I want to teach you some things that will allow you to play at a higher level such as more dynamics or phrasing." This leads to a whole different type of lesson and sometimes includes a discussion about how we know to do these other techniques and why do we do them.

In another lesson, I may hear a student play a piece and all the notes are in place and the dynamics are appropriate

to the level of student, and all the articulations and nuances are in the right style for the piece. At the end of this hearing, I might again ask the student, "What do you think I should say next?" Again, often the student will say, "You should learn the next piece." Actually, they are not wrong, because I will begin to get started on the next piece. What I really mean to do, however, is to build the awareness that the teacher might say something more than just where are the wrong notes or wrong fingerings. When notes, fingerings, and dynamics are all learned, it is still not enough. We want to build "extreme ability." Dr. Suzuki said that once a student develops extreme ability on a piece, they show effortless playing, but he also says we must have beautiful tone that comes from our beautiful hearts.

It is this searching from within that will lead to the third level of playing. I want the student to feel that the performing of a piece comes from their ability to transform or communicate something special to an audience. It can be an imaginary story, or it could just be an emotion like happiness, sadness, curiosity, or fear. I want the student to feel that their playing of the music is a way of communicating and can share a connection, like playing a lullaby (Cradle Song or Berceuse) and putting a baby to sleep. This is an important and very deep layer of the learning process. It also happens when the notes have been completely learned.

In the process of our deep learning, we work at these layers gradually, going deeper and deeper into the music and developing this extreme ability. As this extreme ability becomes effortless and results in communicating beauty, feeling, or a story to the audience, we call this ability "talent."

Step Three: Understanding Learning Styles

Through small steps and lots of repetition the student learns the notes in Level One learning. A new technique introduced at Level Two might require the student to practice hands separately (at the piano) or very slowly even if the piece is already learned and played at the performance tempo. Playing through the entire piece with different dynamics or choices of tempo might be part of Level Three practicing, where the goal is to capture a certain feeling or spirit of a piece. The parent assists the student by asking questions during a practice session so the student can most easily make these choices, experiment, and evaluate his own success.

Does the student understand these different levels? Can the student articulate what level of learning he has accomplished on any of his pieces? With young children, it is not so much about labeling the "level" they achieve with the piece so much as asking questions like, "Do you hear all the notes right when you just played this piece?" "Let's listen for dynamics when you play this piece again." "Is this piece telling us a story?"

As adults, we are analytical and can understand this full process, and some children are very methodical too. They enjoy the step by step process of learning and thrive via the Suzuki approach. These students are conscious of working through all three levels of learning a piece and understand that this process can be applied to each piece before moving onto a new one. Other learners are more intuitive, global learners. These students get totally lost by starting in the middle of a piece or even the middle of a phrase. For these students, we must build trust and confidence in order to achieve the same process of reaching deeper and deeper into a piece. Guiding this student to learn "practice spots" and repetition is a large challenge because the student is fighting this very feeling of being "lost." We must patiently help these students find the notes of the practice spot and help them do each repetition out of the context of the whole piece. On the flip side, these students are the quickest to know what to do about the Level Three layer. They thrive in this creative aspect of the music, which might be more difficult for the process-oriented learner. Because we have learners of many types, we can share these experiences in parent discussion groups. What helps each type of student along? Which style of learning does a parent prefer for themselves? Is it the same as their child? How can different types of learners actually help each other?

I feel that group class does exactly this. For the intuitive learner, we work on practice spots in group class. Everyone does this together, so this type of learner gains more trust and confidence while doing this together. We talk about the musical goal and feeling of a piece. Did we achieve this? What feeling is this piece? Does it tell us a story? When we talk about

this in group class, all students benefit from one another. We all learn to learn in different ways. Knowing we are different types of learners is very helpful. How we handle our practicing at home helps by having this awareness. It can be a challenge, but it can be fun, too. Working at each layer of the three levels can feel like excavating and unearthing the treasure that is buried beneath. Working together can expand our awareness of different learning styles and help us benefit from each other.

Step Four: Positive Reinforcement and Review

I remember a very funny but true story I heard from another Suzuki Piano teacher. She told our group that when she would bake cookies, her husband would walk into the kitchen and say, "What smells so good?!" It would give her a thrill. This little comment made her feel happy to have made the effort to bake the cookies herself. She then went on to contrast this situation with the hypothetical of someone tasting something that you made and saying, "It tastes pretty good, but I really don't like so much salt and maybe you could leave out the mushrooms next time. . ." How might you feel about making the effort to make the dish another time? I think you would agree that you might not try the same dish again or maybe not try at all.

In the Suzuki world, we try to encourage positive language. This is a very difficult habit to learn. We train as teachers to look for the positive, as honest and as specific as possible. "I really like how you are keeping a steady tempo with your new piece! Do you think you are ready to think about dynamics this time?" Finding the positive and being excited about it is very important. Then, just suggesting playing again, or trying for something else as the next step, might be an effective way of practicing together.

We review our pieces because it is hard to think of everything all at once. Fingerings, bowings, tempo, dynamics, balance—there is so much that needs to be right. And as I mentioned before, we have layers of learning. Thus, "review" is simply a way of saying that we're aiming for a specific goal that gets more and more to the artistic way of playing a piece. And when we use the word "polished piece," what we mean is that the student has reached a point where the piece is enjoyable to play, has their personal expressiveness, and shares beauty with all around who are there to listen.

Step Five: Polished Pieces

I remember as a non-Suzuki student growing up, playing in front of others made me a little nervous. It was very typical in my family that whenever we had guests, my parents would ask me to play something on the piano for them. I remember this experience as so many of our Suzuki students so easily perform in front of others because of the group class experience, where they play regularly in front of other students and parents. We rehearse our solos, too, and so performing is quite natural to many Suzuki students. But this is not true for all.

In our practicing, one part of every day is set aside for the review of our polished pieces. These are the pieces the student has been working on and has reached a level that the student can play the piece with ease. We are at the type of practicing (Level Three as mentioned in a previous step) that each time the student plays the piece, she can strive for an emotion, a color, or a story through the music. Each performance might be a little different. These "polished" pieces are called our "review," but it is so important that we are listening and engaging in the expressiveness of each piece while playing through it. What joy we can experience all together in listening to the wonderful achievements of our students. All students become motivated when they hear their parents' praise. During this part of our practice, parents and teachers can always find a very positive observation. Of course, we know that a piece may constantly be improved—but the praise is what keeps the student motivated to continue again and again.

Step Six: How much time should we practice?

This question is particularly asked by new parents regarding beginning students. For young children, practicing may constitute a relatively short amount of time depending upon the style of the child's learning. Practice sessions could be as little as five to ten minutes or as mu ch as an hour. The critical point for the early years is that practice be *every day*. We have a Dr. Suzuki quote, "Only practice on the days you eat!"

Why is daily practice so essential? The most obvious reason is that it becomes a routine for the child. The child learns its importance is akin to eating and sleeping. Thus, for parents and students alike, it becomes a shared time, pleasurable and productive. The brain processes information while the person is sleeping. Daily practice ensures that learning takes place and is being retained through regular patterns of practice and rest. I might rephrase Dr. Suzuki's saying as, "Only practice on the days you sleep!"

So, assuming we are developing a daily routine, the question of length is mostly how much focus the student can sustain and how best to structure the practice. I believe that organizing practice time is most important, and even though the length may vary, something will be accomplished in a session nevertheless. Sometimes a helpful guideline is the length of the lesson time. That is, a 30-minute lesson might require a 30-minute daily practice session. My personal

opinion is that lessons take more time than practice because of all the explaining and talking that also takes place. Thus, if your student practices the same amount of time as his lesson, *more* should be accomplished in the practice session than in the lesson.

The time of the practice session should be divided between the various "sections" of a lesson. That is, a typical Suzuki lesson consists of tone warm-up, working pieces with practice spots, a new preview or technical exercise, polishing and expressive improvement of learned pieces, and sight-reading or scales. These various elements have different demands on the student's focus and thus represent a "full" approach to learning. We have various routines for covering all these elements that lead to the successful learning, and practicing sessions should mirror the lesson structure.

How are you structuring your practice sessions? The length of time spent on practicing depends upon the stamina and attention of the student. If the focus of the practice session switches from one element to another, the student will focus more on each activity. If all thirty minutes are just spent getting the notes of a piece right, the student may get tired and lose focus. It is important to be sensitive to this loss of focus. I find that students who understand what exactly is being practiced—even something as small as a new group of four notes—will practice over and over many more repetitions than assigned. This is the enthusiasm we seek that leads to students being self-motivating in their own practicing.

Every practice session should include "making music." What truly drives the desire to learn is to be able to be creative and make beautiful music. If each practice session includes a moment when one's capacity to do so is appreciated, practicing becomes a pleasure. For our Pre-Twinkle students, clear honest praise from the parent goes a long way. "You did an excellent job carefully lifting your box just like you were holding a real violin!" Let's see if you can hold it in playing position for the whole time while we listen to 'Mississippi Stop-Stop." Playing the recording during practice sessions can be a valuable way to remember that our goal is making beautiful music.

For the busy teenager, practicing time must be incredibly efficient. If the student can only spare 10-15 minutes of practicing due to heavy homework expectations, I would request two things. First, go directly to the practice spots that need focused and careful repetitions or to the new skill that needs to be developed over time. These "exercises" need to be repeated on a daily basis. Secondly, go to any piece that keeps the student at the Level Three of music excellence—this is very important, even in what is only a small span of time spent on music in a busy day. The "playing" part of practicing keeps the hearing as intent and keen as possible. The pieces that you are learning the notes for might be left for a day that there is more time to practice. Listening to these pieces on a daily basis—the ones we are still learning—will accelerate the time it takes to actually learn the music. While driving to school, while doing homework, while eating meals, listening to those pieces we are learning will make practicing on the instrument itself a more efficient process. Training the ear is the most important part of practicing.

While the length of time is an important factor, focus, listening, and a habit of daily practice are most important. With all of those in place, the longer a student practices, the more improvement there will be. I once heard a story about a very young Japanese violin student who was already in a very high book level, perhaps a six-year-old in Book Seven. When the parent was asked how much the student practiced, she would say something like "10 minutes." But afterwards he would proceed to play every piece in the repertoire that he had learned all the way back to Twinkle. Every day he played three hours of music in addition to his ten minutes of "practicing!"

There is no one answer in anything we do. The beauty of the Suzuki approach to learning is that we openly acknowledge that learning is a process. Asking questions, exploring together to find the answers, listening and giving honest, positive feedback and praise will go a long way. ❋

This article was previously presented as a six-week series of short articles in the Suzuki School of Newton weekly e-newsletter.

Sachiko Isihara was born in Cheverly, MD, but her family moved to New York City and then to Buffalo. She did her bachelor's in piano performance at New England Conservatory and a master's in piano performance at Juilliard. She has been a member of SAA since 1984. Her Suzuki training includes being a Kenkyusei in Matsumoto in 1993 and a long term apprenticeship with Colette Daltier in France. Sachiko has completed European Suzuki Level 5. In 2008, she became an SAA Suzuki Piano Teacher Trainer. Sachiko is director of Suzuki School of Newton since 1998, and in 2009 became the director of Suzuki by the Green Piano Institute held in Newton, MA.

Tone is the Soul of Music

A Conversation with Mrs. Maria Pereira, School for Strings Piano Faculty

Interviewed by Yvonne Tsao

On Tone

When we think of a beautiful person we are really thinking of a complete human being, and it includes the soul, that third dimension that we all have. Music also has a soul, and the soul of music is tone.

One might think rhythm is the soul of music, but to me rhythm is not the soul, rather it is the backbone of music. Without rhythm we cannot put music upright. What about sound? Doesn't music happen through sound? Yes, it does. But not every sound has a musical tone.

In order to recognize tone we need to develop a powerful and discerning ear. Once we recognize the tone we can attempt to reproduce it in an instrument. This is not easy to explain. On the piano the touch of the keys breathes life into the instrument and sound is produced. For the sound to be beautiful the tone has to be present, embellishing it.

This is what makes us love some performances more than others. Most of the time it is because the tone is amazing. Tone is the aura that surrounds the sound. It has the power to take our ears to another level of listening and to transport us to a totally different dimension of experiencing music.

It is very difficult to describe tone because it is so subtle. It is like working with our own individual soul. It needs silence, thinking and concentration. Without being able to first listen to silence we cannot start to listen to the tone that needs to come from inside of us. It starts in our imagination. It is very inner to us, the performer. Only when we have it already within us we can unearth it from the instrument.

As we learn to play an instrument, we train our body to bring the tone to life. If we just go through the motions while playing, something will come out. It might be a very good, very proper sound, but it might just be generic. The tone adds a quality to the sound and it makes the listener feel that the performance was truly special.

The tone is also specific to each composer, to different styles and types of music, as not every piece of music requires the same tone. For example, the tone in Chopin is very different from the tone in Prokofiev.

My First Teacher

I have always thought much about tone, both as a teacher and as a performer. These thoughts inevitably bring me back to my childhood and my first memories of discovering tone. It started on Day One when I met my first teacher. She had such an enormous influence on my life. She was an unusual teacher because she was a singer and a singing teacher, yet she played the piano exceptionally well. She only took on two or three piano students in her whole life. She approached playing the piano through her experience in singing.

My father was a dentist. When I was growing up, he had his office in the front of the house and our living quarters were in the back. We lived in a small seaport town in the sSouth of Brazil, and in those years there was no television, just two radio stations in the whole area. In those days I was playing piano all day long, and I loved it. I would listen to songs on the radio, and I would play them with both hands on the piano, to the extent that my family would be dancing to my piano playing.

I was about five years old when this lady, who became my teacher, had a toothache and had to come to my father to fix her tooth. While she was being treated she overheard me playing in the house and asked to see me. I played a few pieces and she immediately turned to my parents and said that she needed to start teaching me right away because what I was doing on the piano would ruin my fingers. I was playing with my fingers all over the place, with no technique.

I was so excited the first day I went to my teacher's house! She had an aura about herself and was a very important person in the context of our little town. She was married to an engineer from Germany who came to run a local factory. She had the most amazing Steinway Grand piano that I ever played on. She had brought it brand new from Germany, and she treated it like her own child. From Day One she allowed me to play on that piano. She saw in me something that made her decide she was going to teach me how to handle this piano as an artist.

She started by showing me how to take a nice sound out of the piano with just one finger. This lesson was repeated on each finger for the next six months. One finger at a time, she was teaching me about tone. She would tell me, "Listen, listen. Touch and listen."

There are only two things we can do on the piano that are responsible for making a good sound: the way we approach the key and the way we get out of the key. It's not like a string instrument where you can change the sound by the way you move the bow. On the piano, we are limited. Once we touch the key, we cannot change the sound. We can only change the way we come out of it. So, she really took a long time in teaching me to listen. At the same time, she was teaching me from the beginning how to round the hand, go up and down with a flexible wrist and play with wonderful weight in the arm. The touch has to start from the fingertip and go deep down into the flesh. That was the fall that created the tone. Those six months were very interesting. For a five-year-old it was not easy to live through it, but during that time I learned to listen!

When I was fourteen years old my teacher started giving me singing lessons. As I was learning to sing I started getting a deeper understanding about tone, and eventually I started looking at it the way my teacher did—tone through singing and through voice. I then began to look for ways to transfer the singing tone to the piano. What I didn't understand about tone while only playing piano, I understood after I started singing.

Finding the Suzuki Method

My life then took a big turn! When I was 22 years old I received a scholarship to study music in Buenos Aires, Argentina. I had great teachers for both singing and piano. After three years I moved to Sao Paulo, where I met my husband and eventually we came to New York. When my oldest daughter was three years old, she came home one day from nursery school telling me that she wanted to learn the violin. From that day on my life changed! I came to The School for Strings.

I met Miss Behrend who was the violin teacher of First Year Parents' Class. I also started accompanying some of her students during lessons. I listened to her teaching, and it amazed me that she was saying the exact same things that my first teacher taught me when I was a little girl. Then I met Miss Keats, and she was also saying those same things. They never stopped talking about beautiful tone, colors, phrases and lines. Miss Behrend always said that the tone in the violin comes from the human voice. Whatever we do when we sing, that is the tone we want to discover in the violin. She would sing opera to her students just like my first teacher did. It was amazing! What Miss Behrend and Miss Keats said reinforced everything I had learned with my first teacher.

I felt that at SFS I finally had come around full circle. Here I found my beginnings and all the things I was brought up to believe in—the beauty that is within the musical context.

Go the extra mile, go for the tone! It is the magic about music. It comes from within us and changes from note to note and from phrase to phrase to create colors and beauty. It is the soul of music. It's what makes music transcend itself and be close to the gods.

The School for Strings is located in New York City. It is a Suzuki-based school that offers a a long-term teacher training program program in violin, cello and piano as well as a comprehensive course of study to children ages three through eighteen. This interview originally appeared in the SFS parent newsletter. ❋

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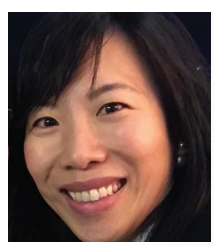

Yvonne Tsao is a proud parent of two budding musicians at the School for Strings in New York City. Having studied piano casually when she was young, Yvonne rekindled her love for music when her children started Suzuki music. Her daughter Sophie is now a 10-year-old cellist studying with Alex Croxton, and her son Theo is a 6-year-old pianist studying with Marta Abraham-Nagyi. Yvonne works as a financial controller and holds a BA in business economics from UCLA and an MBA in finance from NYU Stern.

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Motivating Musicians

Part I of IV

By Karen Gerelus

Music teachers know that motivating their students to engage in lessons, practice at home, and perform in public is a constant challenge. Music lessons are often an extra-curricular activity with varying degrees of commitment and consistency from both students and parents. Despite this, a music teacher's most important but most difficult job—aside from knowing the repertoire, maintaining their own technique, or preparing students for exams and competitions—is convincing a student in only 30 minutes per week that playing their instrument is the most worthwhile thing they have ever done. Although the teacher has devoted his or her entire life to the study of music, this standard cannot always be expected from students. Further, the intrinsic motivation that a teacher has developed may not match the extrinsic motivation that the student needs.

Due to a lack of motivation, many students discontinue music lessons before even a moderate mastery of their instrument in favor of different activities. As students begin lessons with an eagerness to learn, there is "an alarmingly high proportion" of students who subsequently abandoned this effort.[1] When did the original motivation began to decline? What was the cause? How can we prevent the decline in student motivat ion and perhaps mitigate dropout?

Indeed, *how to maintain high levels of motivation in piano students is the ultimate question of private teaching.*

While following articles in this series will give you ideas to keep your students consistently motivated throughout the teaching year, we need to begin with a discussion about the two main types of motivation—intrinsic and extrinsic motivation—which has been further refined into "shades" of motivation along a spectrum. This model of motivation, called Self-Determination Theory, was established by psychologists Edward Deci and Richard Ryan.[2] Their basic premise is that the stronger three psychological needs of competency, autonomy, and relatedness are felt, the more intrinsic motivation becomes. In contrast, where those needs are compromised, motivation swings to become more externally forced and controlled. Deci and Ryan explain that motivation can shift along the scale with experiences, such that a person might originally get involved with an activity because of an external regulation (example: a reward), but "such exposure might allow the person to experience the activity's intrinsically interesting properties, resulting in an orientation shift."[3] Or a person who had previously identified with the value of an activity may lose that sense of value under a demanding teacher.

Extrinsic motivation is seen where the activity is a means to an end and generally determined by someone other than yourself (parent, teacher, coach).

	NOT SELF-DETERMINED ⟷ SELF-DETERMINED					
Motivation	**Amotivation**	**Extrinsic**				**Intrinsic**
Regulation	Non-Regulation	External	Introjected	Identified	Integrated	Intrinsic
Where does behavior originate?	Impersonal	Externally	Somewhat External	Somewhat Internal	Internally	Internally
What does this look like?	Nonvaluing, Inaction, Lack of Control	External Rewards and Punishments	Ego-Involvement, Self-Control	Personal Importance, Conscious Valuing	Congruence with Self, Awareness	Interest, Enjoyment, Satisfaction
Example:	"I'm not practicing that because I don't care about it."	"Practicing this 10 times will earn you $1."	"My favourite part of recitals is when the audience claps for me."	"I know I should play my scales because they're good for me."	"I like performing at the seniors' home; it makes me feel good!"	"I would play the violin all day if I could. I just love this."

External Motivation: obtain a separable outcome like stickers, candy, excursions, internet time, money, grades, or trophies.

This is one of the simplest forms of motivation. Success is usually externally defined (example: "success" is when you win your music festival class) and the award is usually externally granted (example: the festival adjudicator presents a glossy certificate). It may also mean engaging in a behavior to avoid certain negative outcomes, such as punishments. This type of motivation can sometimes be seen as bribing, cajoling, or threatening.

Introjected Motivation: a student performs an act mostly to preserve feelings of self-esteem.

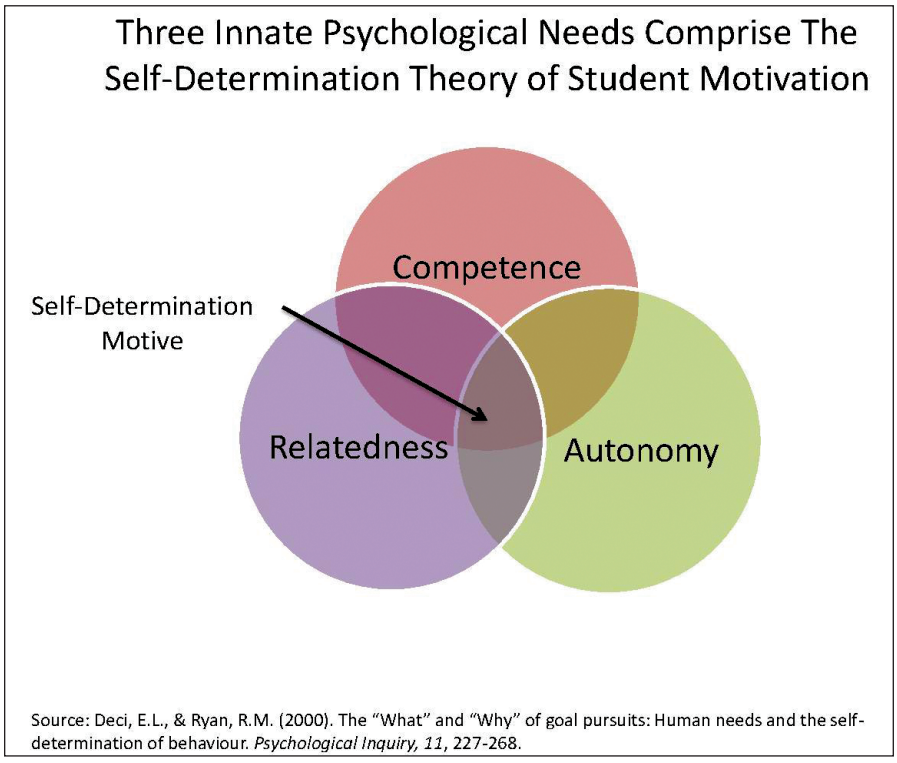
Here, actions have a large amount of pressure to please others. Behaviors display extrinsically motivated gains of ego enhancement or avoidance of personal guilt and anxiety, and people are motivated to display ability or avoid failure in order to maintain feelings of worth. For example, when a trumpet player aims to please the applauding crowd instead of playing for the love of the music, they exhibit introjected motivation.

Identified Motivation: a student identifies with the action and accepts that it is valuable to themselves.

This type of motivation reflects a conscious valuing of a goal or regulation, such that the action is accepted or owned as personally important. Here, behaviors may be externally encouraged, but draw out a personal desire for autonomous activity. For example, a piano student may not particularly enjoy practicing scales, but knows it is important for their development as a pianist.

Integrated Motivation: a student chooses this self-directed behavior, and works in correspondence with "who they are."

This behavior is identified with one's self and is congruent with other personal values and needs. Although this level of integrated regulation shares many qualities with intrinsic motivation, it is still included on the extrinsic spectrum because behaviors are done to attain separable outcomes rather than for their inherent enjoyment. For example, a student volunteers to play cello at a local seniors' residence partly because it is something they enjoy doing, but also partly because it makes them feel good about themselves.



Source: Deci, E.L., & Ryan, R.M. (2000). The "What" and "Why" of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behaviour. *Psychological Inquiry, 11*, 227-268.

Intrinsic Motivation is seen where the activity is a good in itself, developed by personal interest and enjoyment. For intrinsic motivation to flourish there must be three equally important psychological needs present.

Competency: provide optimal challenges, feedback, and positive reinforcement.

Positive performance feedback enhances intrinsic motivation and builds on students' competency. Further, positive feedback, can increase the likelihood that students will return to or persist in an activity and self-report higher interest in the activity.

Autonomy: self-regulated growth, variety of choices, self-directed activity.

When students feel responsible for their own direction—and their own success—intrinsic motivation prospers. It also promotes persistence with future challenges, provides opportunities for self-expression, and increased creativity.

Relatedness: applicability to other skills, contribution to community, caring teachers and mentors.

Relating the current activity to previous knowledge allows for individual internalization and interpretation. Also, the teacher being able to relate to the student builds a relationship and brings a sense of belonging and security.

Although motivation is often treated as a singular concept, humans are motivated both intrinsically and extrinsically. While there is a place for both in the teaching studio, research confirms that intrinsically motivated students have improved cognitive and social development and gain a continuous source of personal wellbeing and vitality throughout life. In order to develop intrinsic motivation in our students, we must build environments which support competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Autonomy seems to be particularly important such that

students' levels of motivation depends on the level of ownership of their music making.[4] For example, in addition to the Suzuki curriculum, consider choosing a "bonus piece" for your student from modern repertoire and make it uniquely theirs; they must be made to feel that although the piece is challenging, it is within their potential to achieve this goal; and that the piece relates well to what they have learned before and what is yet to come.

If any one of these three needs is missing, it is easy to see how intrinsic motivation could be destroyed. If the student begins to learn a piece within their musical capability (gaining competency), and it is viewed as valuable and self-directed (gaining autonomy), but there is little interest from parents or peers (lacking relatedness), intrinsic motivation will be compromised.

While intrinsic motivation is very powerful, extrinsic motivation is often more readily available. Research shows that deadlines, assessments, and negative feedback all diminish intrinsic motivation, and although I agree with this in theory, in practice this is often the time when I see the most growth from students. There never seems to be enough time in the year and the final few months always seem rushed in pursuit of deadlines. Typically, with the external fear of public criticism at a recital, a poor exam mark, or the appeal of gaining a scholarship at a music festival, students work harder during the final month before these events than the rest of the year combined. It is in these situations where students find success and the glimmers of intrinsic motivation begin to appear. It may be the case that, although intrinsic motivation is internal—something organic and cannot be taught—it takes a lot of extrinsic motivation over the course of years to awaken the intrinsic side. As researcher Gary McPherson explains, "When learning to play a musical instrument, young children must invest reasonable effort and develop a modicum of proficiency before they will derive motivational benefits from the process."[5] What students and parents do not realize is that carrying through with extrinsic motivation usually gives way to intrinsic motivation: *effort gives way to ability.*

> Carrying through with extrinsic motivation usually gives way to intrinsic motivation: effort gives way to ability.

Students who are intrinsically motivated report higher levels of personal satisfaction, feelings of accomplishment, and a drive to pursue new and more challenging goals. It is the intrinsically motivated piano student who performs for her grandparents, learns the next pieces on her own, and is more adventurous with volume, speed, and flair in her playing. If intrinsic motivation is not readily apparent, teachers can attempt to build an environment to encourage this quality: we can inspire feelings of competence by celebrating small successes, we can promote autonomy by letting students have choice in how they personalize the music, and we can organize regular group lessons where students' music learning is viewed as valuable and supported by their peers.

Future articles in this series will discuss how to maintain consistently high levels of motivation in parents, students, and teachers. For now, instead of wishing for more motivated students, acknowledge that it is your job to establish an environment which breeds intrinsic motivation. But it is *not* your job to motivate students. As Deci emphasizes, "It is not your job to motivate people. It is your job to create the environments in which people will motivate themselves."[6] A music teacher's ultimate goal is to develop and support intrinsically motivated students, but it is ultimately up to students to find their own self-directed and meaningful motivation given the right circumstances. In other words, if a flower does not bloom, you change the environment in which it grows, not the flower.

This article series, in its original version, first appeared in the Alberta Registered Music Teachers' Association's Impromptu digital newsletter.

Notes

1. A. C. North, D. J. Hargreaves, and S. A. O'Neill, "The importance of music to adolescents," in The British Journal of Educational Psychology, 70, no. 2 (2000): 255–272.
2. E. L. Deci and R. M. Ryan, "The general causality orientations theory: Self-determination in personality," in Journal of Research in Personality 19, no. 2(1985): 109–134.
3. R. M. Ryan and E. L. Deci, "Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations: classic definitions and new Directions," in Contemporary Educational Psychology 25, no. 1 (2000): 54–67.
4. D. J. Hargreaves and N. A. Marshall, "Developing identities in music education," in Music Education Research 5, no. 3 (2003): 263–273.
5. J. Austin, J. Renwick, and G. McPherson, "Developing motivation," in G. McPherson (Ed.), The Child as Musician: a handbook of musical development (New York: Oxford Press, 2006) 213–233.
6. E. L. Deci, Advances in Self-Determination Theory, lecture presented at the Sixth International Conference on Self-Determination Theory, Victoria, BC. (June 2, 2016).

Karen Gerelus is a third generation piano teacher who is entering her eleventh year in the music profession. Karen has completed an Associate diploma in Piano Pedagogy from the Royal Conservatory of Music (ARCT), an Associate diploma in Piano Performance from Trinity College of London (ATCL), and a Licentiate diploma in Piano Performance from Trinity College of London (LTCL). Additionally, in 2010 she convocated from the University of Saskatchewan, 2016 with a Master of Arts in Piano Pedagogy from the University of Ottawa, and is currently a doctoral student at the University of Calgary where her research focuses on motivation in piano students.

Teachers as Leaders, continued from p. 25

They are not going anywhere!" shock you with their success.

It is an amazing principle of the Suzuki method that we teach with the belief that no matter who stands in front of you, he will learn to play the instrument successfully. It is our job to help him make a sound, or learn what's behind the piece of music in a way that it will touch those who are listening. It is a true and funny story that happens often with the families we teach.

When you were asked to be an honorary board member of the SAA, what prompted you to say "yes"?

First of all, being an honorary board member of the Suzuki Association of the Americas is a very big honor. Other than, "yes, thank you," no other words were conceivable. I have very fond feelings for Suzuki for many reasons. Over the years, I have had so many wonderful students who grew up with that foundation, and have seen what it produces. The second reason is more personal but powerful in seeing what it did for my own children. My daughter is an insightful, non-professional music lover, and my son is now a violin professor at the University of Arizona and has been in a professional string quartet. His ear and easy ability to assimilate have to do with the early foundation in the Suzuki method.

I also went to Japan for professional obligations, and my family came with me. I was interested in visiting Matsumoto and meeting Dr. Suzuki. We went to the school unannounced via train, and upon arrival at the school, I identified myself as a teacher from the US who wanted to meet Dr. Suzuki. He and his wife greeted us so warmly, and with such incredible hospitality. He did not speak much English, but his wife was very helpful in explaining the discussion. This visit was a great inspiration, and serving on the SAA Honorary Board closes a circle for me.

We are so thrilled that you agreed to be on the SAA Honorary Board. This has been so personally meaningful as well. This has come full circle beginning with me studying with you, and now speaking with you in a very different capacity. Hearing all your ideas, and your passion makes our community richer.

We are all in this together.

I personally want to thank you not only for agreeing to speak with us, but also for your musical and personal guidance, which has shaped who I am today. What do you need to know to be an effective teacher?

In retrospect, I think the most important thing I needed to experience is great and generous teaching. I was extremely fortunate that I had a great first teacher. Not everyone receives that gift! My first private teacher was a very special musician, teacher, person, and artist. This exceptional person was in my small town, and remains my "lighthouse." After a few years she insisted that I move on, and she sent me to study with Miss DeLay. I remember seeing Miss Delay teach endless hours per day, per week, per year. I thought, "Oh, I am never going to be able to do that." I couldn't imagine it and couldn't see it. Miss DeLay's teaching was revolutionary and somewhat inscrutable. While I didn't practice as much as I should have, I learned from her that we teach a student violin and music, but more truthfully, we use the instrument and subject to teach the person. Therefore, you have to have sensitivity to people and a way to motivate them. You also need to know the material really well to be able to use it as a vehicle.

It is interesting you say that because Suzuki teachers have a saying that goes "character first, ability second." This cannot resonate more true to me.

That is interesting because that philosophy is common to many disciplines. When my kids were studying taekwondo, it was the same idea that the character and discipline come before ability.

One last question, is there anything you would like to tell the members of the Suzuki Association of the Americas?

Suzuki education is named after the revolutionary person who had a passion to put his joy and love into a system we could understand. The Suzuki method should be continually living, progressing, developing, and growing. I have seen that the most phenomenally productive teachers are those who are the most unlimited in their approach. To put it a different way let me use the example of driving. We look forward, and backwards when driving. We look left and right in order. It is not a question of "either or," but that of "and." The future is bright.

Thank you, Paul, for this insightful conversation, and your contributions to our community. We wish you the best in your future endeavors. ✵

Oscar Soler is a native of Caracas, Venezuela. He was appointed to the faculty of the Hurst-Euless-Bedford ISD Suzuki Strings program in 2016 where he teaches students using the Suzuki method. Mr. Soler has taught in workshops and institutes both nationally and internationally. He currently serves on the board of directors of the Suzuki Association of the Americas. He earned a Bachelor of Music, and a Master of Music degree in violin performance and Suzuki pedagogy from the Cleveland Institute of Music. He studied with Paul Kantor and Kimberly Meier-Sims.

Yes, No, Maybe So

By Merry Bing Pruitt

A teacher often has to make decisions about things which may or may not be cut and dried. In random order, here are some that we have puzzled over, with pros and cons that might be considered. One rule I try to live by is, if it's a really tough decision, to give myself a day or more to think about it, and "sleep on it". I used to worry about "is this a control issue?", but now I figure, if I can't control my studio, who is going to do it for me? People might ask for anything, but you need to make your own decisions based on what you think is best. Good luck!

A student wants to have lessons, but not every week. If it is an adult student who takes a time slot that is not the most-requested time of day, you might consider allowing this. You might also charge more per lesson, especially if lessons are so infrequent that they are more like coaching sessions, or if the student wants one of the most-requested times of day, when you could make more money giving the spot to somebody attending full-time.

A student/parent wants a make-up lesson or a no-pay month off, even though your policy says no. Even if you have emailed your policy out, and given a hard copy to the parent along with the contact info for other students so they can arrange to switch time, and sat and gone over the policy face to face with the parent, this might still come up. You can stick to your guns, but there may be instances (such as a serious illness) where you might want to bend. Hint: I set up my tuition for an average of three lessons per month, so I don't have these issues. There are also some teachers who charge for a set number of lessons per school year. Others allow one to three unexcused absences (or lousy excuses) per year. With one family, I didn't want to lose two great kids, so I let them slide once but told the mother I would be keeping to the rules in future.

A family has had a financial set-back. Do you offer a scholarship or a late-payment plan? Some teachers can afford to. I once had the good fortune to have a wealthy family pay the tuition of another family for several months. But another family got so far behind on payments (I was only charging $5 per month late fee), they ended up owing more than $1000. If you let somebody have lessons free, at a reduced rate, or with late payment, here are some possible "cons":

1. Another family might hear of it and ask for the same treatment.
2. The family might value the lessons much less than before.
3. Your financial needs are not so important to the late payer. I had to put my daughter through college while their daughter was enrolled in a private school.

A busy family wants you to reserve two spots per week for one student. Most of us said no, especially if the spots were among the top-requested. At the end of the day, you might decide to allow it until one of those spots is requested by a full-time student.

A family wants to bring a sibling or friend along. Is it going to be a distraction? Is it just on rare occasions? I definitely won't allow it if it is one of the parent lessons.

Not getting along with the parent, or the parent is pushing the pace, and/or disregarding the teacher's instructions. If your studio is shoes-off, or contagious-disease-free, the parent and child need to respect that. People need not to mess with your belongings (potted plants, collections, etc.), bring in colds or flu, or go into private areas of your home. Sometimes it is just forgetfulness or inattentiveness,

but the teacher should be clear so it doesn't become a habit. The leaves of one teacher's jade plant were being punctured by a little one; the teacher gently showed the family, and (this is really nice) gave them a start of the plant. One parent might be refusing to let the child learn at her own pace, constantly teaching the next step, and disregarding the teacher's instructions. The teacher would probably do well to speak up, if not right then, in a private follow-up. Or there's the parent who keeps butting in with instructions or reprimands during the lesson—veteran teacher Linda Stieg kindly says, "One teacher!"

Can I be first or last at the recital, or can I arrive late or leave early? Some of us will accommodate these requests if they are made before programs are printed up. It depends on how you structure your recitals and how you feel about accepting these requests. Others teachers think students should stay for the whole recital, since the last students shouldn't have to play to a nearly empty house.

Do I have to play on the recital? Some teachers say yes. Others offer more leeway, especially if it is an adult or a shy newcomer or transfer student. One teacher has small home recitals for the adult students and their spouses. I have found that an adult, like a child, needs to be playing a piece they are really familiar with, not the newest piece, and I do not require that an adult play on a recital unless they want to.

Do I have to compete? This one is up to the teacher. Some auditions/competitions offer the option of "Comments Only" or categories such as Hobbyist. ❋

Merry Bing Pruitt co-founded Suzuki Piano Friends, along with Maryfrances Kirsh and Judy Mains Scurci. She has had several articles published in the American Suzuki Journal, and has written a book entitled *You Might Be A Pianist If*. Mrs. Pruitt was the director of teacher training at Capital University for twenty years, and while there she also wore the hats of faculty member, Suzuki mom, and student. She also directed the Project Peru workshops, which were the first North American Suzuki workshops to benefit the Suzuki program in Peru. In addition to giving concerts and serving as an adjudicator, Mrs. Pruitt is the music director at Reformation Lutheran Church. She teaches piano, harpsichord, violin, and viola at her home studio in Bexley, OH. Her students range in age from toddler to senior citizen, and she enjoys the uniqueness of every single one. She and her husband John are the well-trained servants of a calico cat, Pippi, who specializes in improvised kitty-ditties with lots of paw clusters and also won't quit playing until she hears enthusiastic applause, even at 3 a.m.

SAA Board of Directors, continued from p. 9

What unique personal skills did you feel you were able to offer in service to the Board?

I enjoy looking at an issue or a problem from multiple angles and debating all different perspectives, regardless of my own personal perspective, in order to come at the best possible conclusion. I feel I have some skills in listening to a conversation and allowing my own opinions to be heard but also allowing my opinions to be shaped and changed so that my original ideas, informed by the wisdom and knowledge of my colleagues, creates a better, often more creative idea as a result.

What will you miss about not being on the Board?

I will miss the camaraderie with my colleagues from around North America, because in our diversity was great wisdom and varied experience that was stimulating and enjoyable. I will miss my ability to contribute in such a tangible way to an organization that I have grown to respect and understand at a much deeper level over my past three years of board service. I enjoy being in the thick of things and I will miss that greatly!

In what direction(s) do you see the organization moving in the future?

I believe the SAA is growing in knowledge and experience, and I see thoughtful leadership in many different aspects of our organization. Because of the level of commitment and humility that I observed in our leadership, I see the SAA moving forward and adjusting with the changes to technology and culture. I also truly understand now how changes must be made cautiously, but with unrelenting openness to change. Often I would hear an idea and would immediately categorize it as a wonderful idea that shouldn't be too tricky. And then after looking at the concept on a deeper level I would understand that there were more facets of complication then I ever imagined! The idea would morph, change, and ultimately either not work, or reappear stronger and more vibrant. I fully believe that the SAA Board strives to keep up with our rapidly changing world, but does so in a thoughtful, deliberate way, so that we do not lose what we already have. I am by nature impatient, and a creative thinker, but I have learned that patience allows more of those creative ideas to flourish!

Anything else you'd like to add?

I am honored and humbled that I had the privilege of serving on the SAA Board. I walked away in awe of what this organization does to contribute to society as a whole, and in awe of the careful stewardship of our limited resources. If even a fraction of our membership's creative ideas are brought to fruition, we will indeed change the world! ❋

XXXIII International Suzuki Festival—Lima, Peru

by Caroline Fraser
with Renata Jordao

The XXXIII International Suzuki Festival was held in Lima, Peru, from January 5–25, 2018. This is the most international Suzuki event to take place in the entire SAA region, with 14 countries from within the Americas participating this year, in addition to guest teachers Moshe and Lily Neumann, who traveled from Israel. The following countries were represented: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela, and the United States.

Around 240 teacher participants took training courses, 240 students attended the children's festivals along with their parents, and 30 teachers, both Peruvian and international, taught during the student festivals.

Photos by Sergio Aguilar

Congratulations and thanks to our producer, Luciana Castillo (currently living in Brazil), our office staff headed by our administrator Maria Pia Beltrán Landers, our festival coordinators Annika Petrozzi and Roberta Centurión, and our festival committee, for their tireless work throughout the year in preparation for this major event.

Training courses were offered in cello, guitar, piano, recorder, violin, and highly successful enrichment courses were given in early childhood music, introduction to music, dynamics for teaching music in the classroom, Kodaly, music reading, and piano group classes. Many thanks to our teacher trainers: Ed Kreitman (US), Marilyn O´Boyle (US), Renata Pereira (Brazil), Patricia Pasmanter (Argentina), Diana Chagalj (Argentina), Flor Canelo (Peru), and Caroline Fraser (Peru); and to the teachers of the Enrichment courses: Roxana del Barco (Peru), Roberta Centurión (Peru), Lydia Mills (Chile), and Cecilia Rodriguez (Peru).

The Peru Festival is made possible in part by support from the SAA for the teacher trainers' airfares and participants'

scholarships. Within Peru, the Escuela Nacional de Folklore gives our courses official credit, and the Colegio Santa Ana very generously hosted our event.

In addition, this year we received special collaboration from individuals who wanted to help bring Cuban teachers to Peru to receive training. This was the first time Cuban teachers living in Cuba have been able to travel to Peru for Suzuki training. Many thanks to Suzuki teachers Agathe Jerie and Egmont Rath and their families in Switzerland; to Taiwanese participants from Donut Studio, and the directors David Ko and Chien Chi Lin in Taipei; and to participants from HNU Summer Suzuki Piano Institute for their generous donations. The Cuban teachers, Cecilia Rosales Prieto and Jana Marieta Perdigón, were also aided in travel and tuition by SAA scholarships.

I had the pleasure of interviewing Cecilia and Jana upon completion of their courses and before returning to Cuba. Here are some excerpts from our conversations.

Caroline: *So, how do you feel now after this whole experience?*

Ceci: First of all, very happy because we have fulfilled our dream by coming to the Festival. More than just sharing, we now have a whole range of knowledge and tools which we had only experienced indirectly before in videos, but to experience it live has been a unique opportunity. It has been wonderful to hear the children play, and to see the whole approach including parents, families, and teachers all living the same spirit.

Jana: [her voice trembling with emotion] Yes, a dream come true! We had always dreamed of this experience! We had always wanted to get more training and become better teachers. Suzuki has given me back life! I think of all the mistakes I have made as a teacher and mother... Now I am going

back full of desire to change radically... My children will get a shock!

It has been a tremendous life example, showing us how we can achieve so much with a completely different approach to education.

Ceci: I think that with the Suzuki approach, we can change the world!

The education system needs to change. We have to understand that not all children learn in the same way, that each child learns at his or her own pace, and if one is playing Twinkle and the other is playing Aunt Rhody, that is okay!

Jana: The other part that really impressed me was that the child's progress is the teacher's responsibility, and it is the teacher's job to reach every child. Lack of advancing is not the child's fault. It depends on our use of the methodology.

I thought it was great in the music reading class that the teacher knew how the child would react, and where to take him at each step. Everything was planned and well thought out. Step by step, each step preparing for the next. Guiding the child to understand. These are fundamental strategies that we are excited to implement.

Caroline: *What was most impressive for you at the festival?*

Jana: The most impressive for me was the fact that so many teachers were coming back to retake the training courses. They don't have the attitude of, "Now I know everything," or "I am now a specialist at level x!" No! I observed teachers of different levels, from different realities, with different degrees of preparation, who all felt the need to keep training and training. This was so impressive!

Ceci: I noticed there is no such thing as an aptitude test before accepting the child. And I have also seen is how the children love to play together! It is so motivating!

We saw children and their parents in the festival. Parents, completely involved, paying attention, carefully helping the children with posture. This union between parents, children, and teachers is impressive. We have to learn from this example.

Caroline: *Any other concept that you are taking away with you?*

Ceci: I saw teachers enter each class with a smile, a kindness, such confidence that the child can do it. This is what I want to transmit to my children. It is always good to assure the children that they can do it!

Jana: I have a twin sister who lives in the US. I sent her a video of a piano lesson where the student was transposing. My sister asked, "When did the child learn to transpose?" I responded, "By ear." Now she wants to come to the festival! She said, it is like being blind and then suddenly being able to see!

Caroline: *What can you say about the friendships you have made during these 21 days?*

Ceci: Wonderful! We have so much empathy with our host family and with our roommates. Now we are sisters! We have met people from all over Latin America, from the US, from Scotland+

And we have Whatsapp groups from all our courses!

Jana: Thanks to the internet we can keep in contact. So many people want to exchange information. To begin with, we were afraid about how it would be. It was our first time outside of Cuba. However, we have felt very good here, and now we have friends

in Perú, Brazil, Ecuador, Colombia, Paraguay, Chile...

Caroline: *What immediate action are you planning upon your return to Cuba?*

Jana: The first thing is to meet with the string teachers of our schools and let them know about our experience. We will clarify the concepts of the Suzuki approach, and encourage them to work with the Suzuki philosophy. Of course, we ourselves have to live the philosophy and transmit it to our students and families.

Ceci: We also want to start a new project in which we can start with younger children and include the parents. In our school, children start their training at seven or eight years of age without the parents attending class.

Jana: It is so important to have the parents involved!

We are very grateful for the opportunity to come to Peru. Without the economic and emotional support, we would not have been able to attend. The help from Egmont and Agathe is crucial as well as the scholarship from the SAA.

Ceci: Egmont will come to Cuba in February to give a course on how to make pre-violins.

Jana: It is important to demonstrate to our colleagues there that the Suzuki method is a philosophy and not just repertoire.

Ceci: We want to thank the Suzuki Association of Peru also, for all the care, the emails and correspondence which have made our journey possible. Everyone we have come in contact with has been wonderful to us. We leave with this beautiful experience within us and we want to share it in our country and with the world.

These interview excerpts were transcribed by Renata Jordao and translated by Caroline Fraser.

In addition to the Cuban teachers, the Peru festival was happy to welcome our first participant from San Juan Sacatepéquez, Guatemala. Pedro Tubac traveled to Peru, thanks to financial support from World Vision, Guatemala. Pedro plans to give back to his community by sharing the knowledge he has gained with parents and their children. Pedro received a donation of the Minibooks Music Reading Series for piano, generously made by the Canadian author, Kristine Gore.

Renata Jordao (Brazil) wrote about the impact the Peru festival has in Latin America from her point of view:

Renata: The first time I came to the Peru festival in 2016 I was astounded. I had already attended courses elsewhere, but now I realised what it meant to be part of something bigger, and that the objective goes far beyond receiving training on an instrument. One gets a sense of the human aspect and the impact on communities. This philosophy affects our relationships within the family, amongst our friends, our colleagues, and society in general.

Here I could experience teamwork, cooperation, with everyone working towards a common goal. In 2016 I had the opportunity to experience the Teachers' Encuentro. I could listen to what it was like to have the Suzuki Association of Peru working for more than 30 years. It is a great example and inspiring for us.

The effect was immediate. I found Fabio dos Santos who today is the director of the recently created Suzuki Association of Brazil, and I offered my help in whatever may be needed within the new association.

It was a great inspiration to hear of the experiences of the different associations in Latin America, both old and new. One example of the fruits of

working together is the translation of articles and documents which beforehand only existed in English, and now with the project coordinated by Marilyn O'Boyle and many volunteers from several countries, we have the texts available in Spanish and Portuguese.

Another important aspect of the Festival in Peru is the opportunity to be in contact with many countries at the same time. It is incredible how much strength we can gather from being united. There are no borders, just one big family walking together. I have had the opportunity to meet with people from all over Latin America and it is such a rich experience sharing ideas, information and creating energy to move forward as a community. Opportunities, invitations, and possibilities of travel arise. You have to experience it in order to understand.

For example, after the 2016 festival, I received an invitation from Sara Moreno (from the Suzuki Association of El Salvador) to participate in their festival, in San Salvador, El Salvador, and it was a very exciting time for me as a violin teacher. I went as a volunteer to give classes to children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and at-risk situations in San Salvador. Through the Suzuki philosophy, I could see the transformation in their community. Young people who had lost their sense of identity found their place as productive and respected members of society.

All of this thanks to the fact that in the Peru festival we have the opportunity to be together and share. What a joy it is to be part of an event of this magnitude. In each Peru festival we receive inspiration and knowledge, friendship and confidence, and we return to our countries to share with others what we have absorbed. And we want to return the following year, being committed to Dr. Suzuki's ideal of lifelong learning, for the benefit of the world's children.

During the Peru festival we always make space for an "Encuentro" or sometimes a "Mini Encuentro" for teachers. This is an opportunity to come together and share ideas and visions. This year, Renata Jordao gladly accepted the responsibility of coordinating this year's Mini Encuentro for teachers. Here is a summary of her report:

Miniencuentro de Profesores Suzuki de America Latina 2018

During the Mini Encuentro 2018, we developed the topic "Association: Definition, doubts, benefits and challenges.

During two days of intense activity, discussions, and presentations, we had the opportunity to share achievements, new ideas and experiences, clarify doubts, and fill our souls with enthusiasm, motivation, and energy to return to our countries to continue sowing seeds. We were nurtured with the inspiration of those who truly know how to work together as a team, setting aside personal agendas to work towards a common goal, for the good of all.

We started by welcoming all the countries present and followed by brain storming sessions in which we were able to expose and share all kinds of doubts that arise when we want to form an association, both from the personal point of view, and from the more practical point of view. We discussed the advantages of forming an association, all in a relaxed and cordial atmosphere.

It was very worthwhile to discuss not only what is necessary for the organization and beginnings of an association, but more importantly the most important challenge which is to keep the association going in harmony, despite the diversity of ideas and interests of its members.

Parallel to this enriching learning experience we enjoyed the participation of certain countries who presented specific topics such as:

Perú — the Suzuki Association of Peru (ASP) board of directors, President Flor Canelo: Defining the responsibilities of each board member

Brasil — The process of rebuilding an Association: Challenges and possible solutions

Ecuador — INEPE: Suzuki and communities in economic disadvantage

México — The Mexican Suzuki Association and the recognition of Music Schools and school programs by the Association with specific requirements for ongoing teacher training

México — Cancún 2019, 1st Convention Suzuki of the Americas

Marilyn O' Boyle — Updating the Teacher Development Program in Latin America and the translation project

Fabio dos Santos — Organizational document on producing a festival

Chile — Blancamaría: Presentation on "Pre Piano"

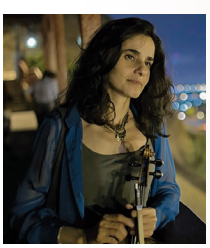
Panel — ASP, "The Voice of Experience"– Roberta Centurión, Caroline Fraser and Annika Petrozzi

Suzuki and Folklore — Flor Canelo and Gláucia Borja (presented by Renata Jordão) Studies developed in folk music scores, based on the principles of the Suzuki philosophy: focusing on the orchestra and the individual instrument study.

As a result of our discussion it was understood how important it was to have an association, which is just the union of forces to reach a common goal, sharing work, overcoming obstacles to fulfil a dream: forming a network which connects us all. Together we can go far, together we can achieve more, together we can change the world.

Translated by Caroline Fraser

Caroline Fraser graduated from Edinburgh University with a BM and studied at the Royal Academy of Music in London, obtaining the diplomas Licentiate of the Royal Academy of Music (piano) and Licentiate of the Royal College of Music (violin). She obtained an MM degree with Kodaly emphasis from Holy Names University (HNU) in California. From 1992 until 1999 she was lecturer in music theory at HNU and she continues to direct the Summer Suzuki Piano Teacher Training Institute. Caroline is an ESA, SAA, and ARSA teacher trainer, traveling and teaching throughout the world. She currently lives in Lima, Peru, and is a Latin American liaison for the SAA. She is passionate about promoting a natural approach to teaching music reading and theory for Suzuki students.



Renata Jordão received her BM in orchestral conducting from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and furthered her studies in both orchestral conducting and violin in Paris at the École Normale de Musique de Paris with Dominique Ruitz and Marie Claude Theuveny, as well as in Brussels (violin) at the Académie de Musique de Wemmel with Johan Lommelen. In Barcelona, Spain, she studied violin with Eva Graubin and orchestral conducting with Maestro Jordi Mora, former disciple of Sergiu Celibidache.

Since her first Suzuki training in 2013, Ms. Jordão has registered violin Books One to Five (each more than once) with Edward Kreitman, Shinobu Saito, Charles Krigbaum, Fernando Piñero, and Marilyn O'Boyle. In addition, she has enriched her training attending Dalcroze with Jeremy Dittus, Kodaly with Lydia Mills, Music Reading with Caroline Fraser, and Suzuki Early Childhood Education. She has also been a teacher in many Suzuki Festivals such as Suzuki International Festival in Lima, Peru, and in San Salvador, El Salvador.

Inspired by Suzuki´s book *Nurtured by Love* and following her passion for teaching, she has founded three violin orchestras in disadvantaged communities of both Rio de Janeiro and Minas Gerais, Brazil (Orquestra Cartola-Petrobrãs, Orquestra Nova Sinfonia and Orquestrando Canela). Delighted with Suzuki Method's results and its life-changing power, Renata is specially committed to sharing her knowledge and skills with youths at risk and also runs her private studio in her hometown, Petrõpolis, Rio de Janeiro.

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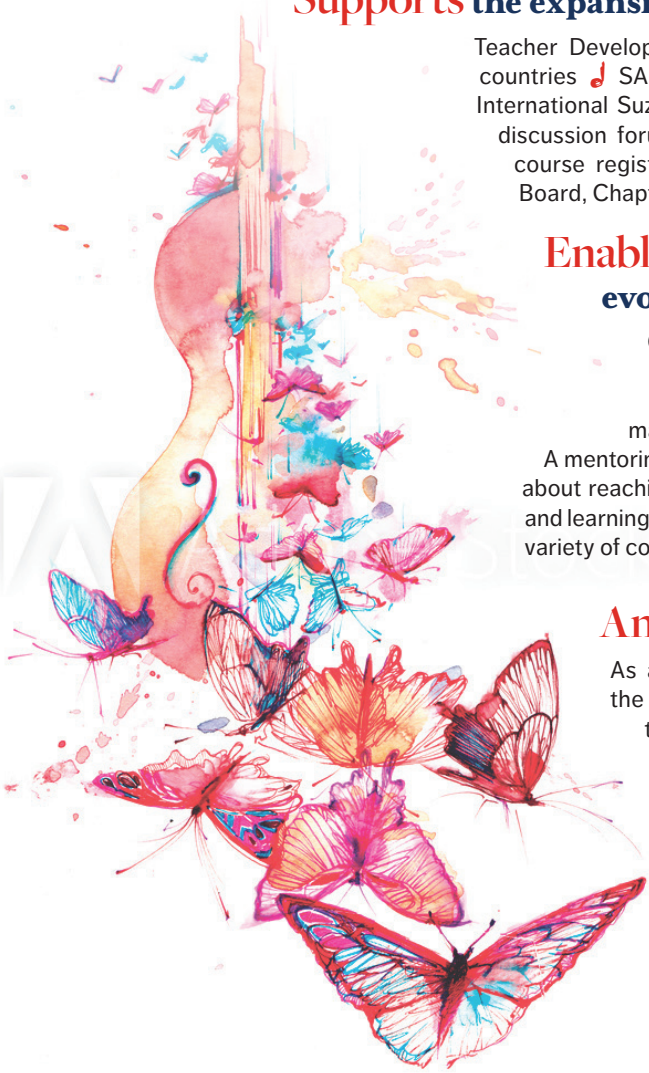

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