American Suzuki Journal

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

Volume 45 #1

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Photo by Lisa-Marie Mazzucco

Cover image: Rachel Barton Pine, see page 44.

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The Suzuki Association of the Americas aspires to improve the quality of life in the Americas through Suzuki education. We seek to create a learning community which embraces excellence and nurtures the human spirit.

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Chair's Column

By Sarah Bylander Montzka

At the end each day I take time to write down a few things for which I am grateful. I've been keeping a gratitude journal, off and on, for the past twenty years. Sometimes I miss a few days or even weeks. And much of the time the entries are less about gratitude and more about recording small moments that made me smile. But even though I'm not 100 percent faithful about writing in the journal, I appreciate how the practice helps me recognize beauty, joy, and kindness in each day.

As you might predict, many journal entries are devoted to family, friends, and celebrations with a random food revelation thrown in—like March 18, 2005: "Peanut butter toast. Mmmmmmmmm!" Beyond the expected subjects, though, a surprisingly large number of gratitude reflections come from my Suzuki experiences.

Mr. Preucil proclaiming from the balcony, "Kevin kept his hand in position for eight measures. ALL IS WELL!" (June 10, 1997)

The smile on Louisa's face when she heard Art Tatum's version of "Humoresque" (May 12, 1999)

A fun viola dinner at the American Suzuki Institute (August 7, 2005)

Grateful for Laurie's help and encouragement (Colorado Suzuki Institute, June 7, 2007)

I love my job (November 29, 2005)

Reading through these memories, I can't imagine any other career that would take up so much space in those gratitude journals. I am reminded how fortunate I am to be a part of our Suzuki community. Through Suzuki, I have had access to expert training courses, engaging conferences and leadership training. As a member of Team Suzuki I am surrounded by inspiring, supportive colleagues and mentors: professionals who share a passion for lifelong learning and collaboration and who hold me to a high standard of excellence. When I think of the infinite and intangible gifts the Suzuki journey has given me, I can't help but feel thankful.

But there is one little hiccup in this arrangement. . .

Research shows that there are psychological health benefits associated with gratitude. According to *Psychology Today*, "Gratefulness—and especially expression of it to others—is associated with increased energy, optimism, and empathy."

"They do not love that do not show their love." – Shakespeare

Mr. Preucil's balcony announcement taught me the magic of the unexpected. Laurie's encouragement came at a crucial time. These moments of joy and generosity still make me smile. But they are all hidden away, kept to myself. What if I had shared? If I had shared my gratitude, maybe there would be *two* people smiling instead of just one.

During this season of gratitude and reflection, I will continue to appreciate this vibrant, accomplished and caring professional community. I will continue to look for the joyful connections hidden in each day and work to cultivate gratitude. But from now on I'll be a little louder about it—and hope you will join me. Let's greet the coming year with fully-voiced gratitude. **Share**, out loud, what you love about the Suzuki world, **honor** a Suzuki friend with a star in the Giving Galaxy, **reach out** to people you value and tell them why, **write** a thank-you note. And lastly, know that our Suzuki community would not be the same without *your* presence in it. And for that, I am grateful.

SAA Central Office
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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.

Studio Memberships

Active teacher members of the SAA may collect 10 or more Associate memberships from families in their studio for only $30 US/CAN per family. Studio memberships must be submitted to the SAA all at one time, but separate checks for each family are OK.

☐ $30 US/CAN each for 10 or more

SAA Membership Form

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Please print clearly in ink.

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☐ Individual ☐ Group

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Name of Individual (or Group) _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone (Day) _____ (Eve) _____

Fax _____ Email _____

If group, list contact person: _____

Type of group: ☐ 1 Gr. ☐ 2 Org. ☐ 3 Sch. ☐ 4 Inst. ☐ 5 Lib. ☐ 6 Bus. ☐ 7 Etc.

Please check appropriate categories: Instruments taught (or studying if student)

☐ Teacher	☐ Parent/Family	☐ Bass	☐ Cello	☐ Flute	☐ Guitar
☐ Harp	☐ Organ	☐ Piano	☐ Recorder	☐ Trumpet	☐ Voice
☐ Viola	☐ Violin	☐ Suzuki Early Childhood		☐ Suzuki in the Schools	
☐ Retired Teacher		☐ Student	☐ Public School Teacher		

Membership Categories and Annual Dues:

☐ Active Individual: $75 US/CAN
☐ Group: $85 US/CAN
☐ Associate: $38 US/CAN
☐ Patron: $185 US/CAN
☐ Lifetime: $1,450 US/CAN
☐ Required airmail for members outside North, Central, South America and the Caribbean: add $38 US mailing fee.
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☐ I have named/would like to name SAA in my will.

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- **Active Membership** (Individuals)
  Required for teachers, available to parents and other individuals. Includes *American Suzuki Journal*, SAA Directory, voting and office holding privileges, access to the SAA training program, eligibility for Chapter Affiliate membership (where available), etc.
- **Group Membership**
  For **(1)** groups, **(2)**organizations, **(3)** schools, **(4)** institutions, **(5)** libraries, **(6)** businesses, **(7)** etc. Includes *ASJ*, SAA Directory and miscellaneous benefits. ***Group** Membership does not substitute for **Individual** Membership.*
- **Associate Membership**
  For parents, families, retired Suzuki teachers & others. Benefits include a one-year subscription to the *ASJ*.
- **Patron Membership**
  Includes Active Membership, and support for the Suzuki movement.
- **Lifetime Membership**
  Includes on-going Active Membership plus benefits of Patron Membership.

ISA Board Meeting

The SAA hosted this year's International Suzuki Association Board of Directors meeting in Boulder, Colorado. During the meeting the board visited Peaksware, LLC, the Boulder company that now includes MakeMusic, producer of SmartMusic and Finale and TrainingPeaks, a software development company for coaches and athletes.

The ISA board outside Peaksware facility, left to right: (back) Paul Landefeld, interim CEO, US; Martin Rüttimann, ESA representative, chair-elect, Switzerland; Pazquale Razzano, at-large member, US; Allen Lieb Jr., Interim CEO and CEO effective July 1, 2017, US; (front) Etsuko Suehiro, TERI representative, Japan; Koji Toyoda, president, Japan; Hiroko Driver-Lippman, at-large member, US; Julia Breen, at-large member, secretary, Australia; Pam Brasch, SAA representative, treasurer, US; Yasuki Nakamura, PPSA representative, chair, Australia; Lan Ku Chen, ARSO representative, Taiwan.

Considering Studio Memberships?

Active teacher members of the SAA may enroll a group of 10 or more families as a group through the Studio Membership option. Each studio family pays only $30 US/CAN/year. All of the memberships in the Studio membership group must be submitted to the SAA at one time, but separate checks for each family are fine. Studio memberships save each family $8 over the alternative—the regular Associate Membership for $38, and Studio members receive the journal and the other advantages of Associate members.

Our appreciation goes to those programs and teachers who currently support the SAA by maintaining Studio memberships, with thanks to Stephanie Judy, BC, Suzanne Rickman, IL, Lucy Lewis, CA, Wendy Seravalle-Smith, ON, Charmian Steward, CA, Nancy Modell, NJ, Amarillo College Suzuki Program TX, Beth Cantrell, VA, Joan Krzywicki, PA, Billy Switzer, NC, Deanna Badgett, TX, Elizabeth Pritchard, TX, The School for Strings, NY, Daina Volodka Staggs, TX, and Christy Paxton, AR.

> *We love the studio membership. My husband and I have no formal musical training but have been Suzuki parents for about 15 years now, thanks in part to our annual studio membership. We like the variety of articles in the journal, from very specific to general, from musician interviews to convention reports. It helps to validate our daily efforts and to make us not feel like one family in a small studio in suburban Chicago but more like one small part of a large, world-wide musical education movement.*
>
> *–Amy Boerman-Cornell, studio of Suzanne Brookes Rickman*

2016 Scholarship Recipients

The following teachers received scholarships for Teacher Development in 2016. Recipients attended courses at institutes and workshops in North America and at Latin American festivals; some used scholarship awards for study in university Suzuki pedagogy degree programs. Thank you to all who supported the SAA Teacher Development Scholarship Fund this year!

(Recipients are from the U.S., unless otherwise noted)

Chenoa Alamu, Violin (Margery Aber Memorial Scholarship); **Timothy Angel**, Violin (John and Catherine Kendall Memorial Scholarship); **Emily Beckman**, Flute (Jupiter Music Scholarship); **Christopher Bedoya**, Cello (Alberta Denk Memorial Scholarship); **Ana Benites**, Chile, Violin (Latin American Scholarship); **Martha Bruce Ellerman**, Violin (Shar Music Scholarship); **Luis Casal**, Violin (Things 4 Strings Scholarship); **Maria Caswell**, Cello (Clifford Cook Memorial Scholarship); **Gustavo Adolfo Cojon Aquino**, Guatemala, Viola (Latin American Scholarship); **Sarah Dudas**, Violin (SAA Scholarship); **Erin Durham**, Violin (Super-Sensitive Musical String Company Scholarship); **Annalisa Ewald**, Guitar (SAA Scholarship); **Aubrey Faith-Slaker**, Piano (SAA Scholarship); **Elida Figueroa**, Honduras, Violin (Latin American Scholarship); **Fernando Luis Formigo**, Argentina, Flute (Latin American Scholarship); **Lisa Goddard**, Practicum (Gwendoline Thornblade Scholarship); **Kale Good**, Guitar (Frank Longay Memorial Scholarship); **Ryan Hoffman**, Cello (Adam Lesinsky Memorial Scholarship); **Elizabeth Ingber**, Violin (Potter Violin Company Scholarship), **Kate Jones**, Bass (CodaBow International Scholarship), **Catheryn Kennedy**, Canada, Violin (SAA Canadian Scholarship), **Meagan Kilpatrick-Milburn**, Piano (Doris Koppelman Memorial Scholarship); **Alyse Korn**, ECE, (SAA Scholarship); **Alyssa Lawson**, Cello (Yvonne Tait Memorial Scholarship); **Renata de Lemos Miranda Jordao**, Brazil, Violin (Latin American Scholarship); **Vanamali Medina**, Flute (SAA Scholarship); **Tony Maroun Moussa**, Violin (Arline Hunter Memorial Scholarship); **Keri Munchinsky**, Canada, Violin (SAA Canadian Scholarship); **Joaquin Olivares Martinez**, Mexico, Guitar (Latin American Scholarship); **Hadassa Pacheco**, Brazil, Piano (Latin American Scholarship); **Emma Pease-Byron**, Flute (SAA Scholarship); **Angela Mosher Phi**, Canada, Flute (Heidi Kennel Memorial Scholarship); **Jay Pike**, Violin (David Einfeldt Memorial Scholarship); **Julieta Libertad Nava Rivera**, Mexico, Flute (Latin American Scholarship); **Mariana del Rosario Rodriguez Alcantara**, Guatemala, Violin (Latin American Scholarship); **Juan Carlos Rodriguez Pomar**, Peru, Flute (Latin American Scholarship); **Ricardo Salinas**, Mexico, Guitar (Latin American Scholarship); **Pedro Santos de Axevedo**, Brazil, Trumpet (Latin American Scholarship); **Jesica Sharp**, Bass (Margery Aber Memorial Scholarship); **Ji Yeon Shin**, Violin (Alfred Music Publishing Scholarship); **Noemi Magdalena Solis Del Rosario**, Peru, Piano (Latin American Scholarship); **Ben Thomason**, Violin (Art Montzka Memorial Scholarship); **Margarita Valderas**, Chile, Violin (Latin American Scholarship); **Lydia Young**, Cello (Virginia Cowan Carlson & Jennifer Jabs Memorial Scholarship).

We would like to thank the teachers who assisted with scholarship evaluations for 2016, including Joan Krzywicki, Dominick and Linda Fiore, Elizabeth Guerriero, Chris Mincer, Lynne Cooksey, and Shelley Beard Santore.

Calendar of Events 2016

November 1	Virtual Conference Sampler opens
November 20	Concert sponsored by The Suzuki Alumni Project: Jasper String Quarter, Philadelphia
December 1, March 1, June 1	ASJ ad contracts due (Artwork due within 30 days after contract date)
December 31	Final date for 2016 SAA donations

2017

January	Parents as Partners Online – details TBA
January 13-15	SAA Board Meeting, Los Angeles, CA
January 29	Concert sponsored by The Suzuki Alumni Project Claremont Trio, Merkin Hall, NYC
February 1	Registration opens for Leadership Retreat
April 21-23	SAA Board Meeting, Boulder, CO (tentative)
May 25-29	SAA Leadership Retreat, details to come

Correction

The article in ASJ vol. 44 no. 4 titled "Suzuki Method and Autism Therapy: How students with autism can learn with the combined benefits of Applied Behavioral Analysis and the Suzuki Method" by Allison Huebner-Woerner was truncated because of an editing error. A list of resources for families and teachers of children with autism and Ms. Huebner-Woerner's bio and photo were eliminated from the final version. SAA members may view the entire article with resource list and author bio and photo on our website. Please visit: https://suzukiassociation.org/news/suzuki-method-autism-therapy/

Correction

The SAA regrets that the 2016 Membership Directory did not correctly identify the cover contest winner. Our congratulations and thanks to Clara Marshall from Oakville, Ontario, a student of Silvija Abols. Her artwork made a delightful cover for our new directory!

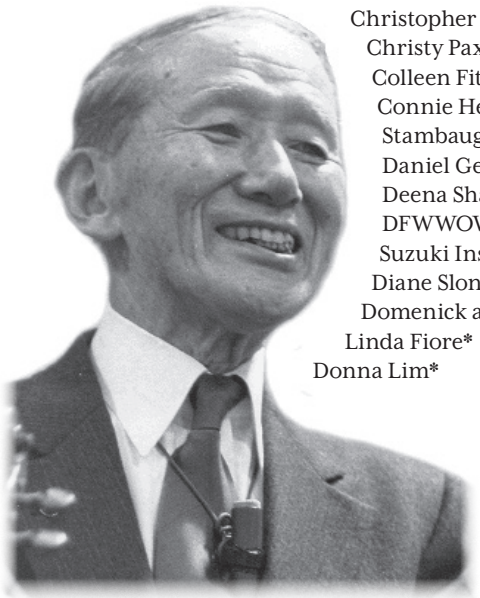
$14,693 Raised

Thank You!

From October 12 to October 20, SAA members joined together to celebrate the birthday of Dr. Suzuki, our beloved Suzuki community, and future generations of teachers. Together, we raised $14,693 for the SAA Teacher Development Scholarship Campaign, surpassing our goal of $10,000.

Thank you to all those who donated a layer to Dr. Suzuki's Birthday Cake in honor of the Suzuki community. Special thanks go out to our generous matching donor who helped us achieve this goal. Together, we are spreading the gift of Suzuki education and expanding our vibrant community of dedicated, professional educators.

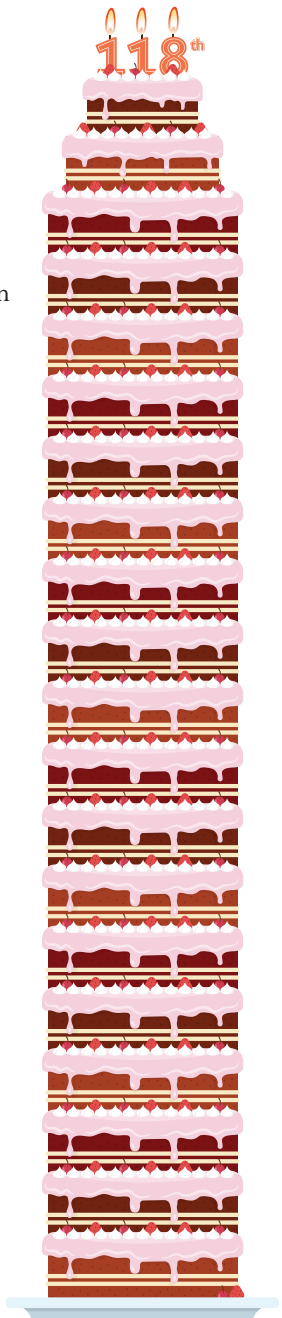
See the cake and read the dedications: https://suzukiassociation.org/suzuki-birthday/ Missed the campaign? It's never too late to donate! Give year-round by visiting: https://suzukiassociation.org/giving/



Abbey Hansen
Abigael & Smith
Alex Revoal
Allen Lieb*
Alyssa Hardie Beckmann
AnnArbor Suzuki Institute*
Anne Bowman
Anne Donahue
Anonymous
April Losey*
Barbara Riley
Barbara Scheafer
Barbara Wampner
Beatrice Blanc*
Beth Cantrell
Beth Scott
Beth Titterington
Beth Vojtisek
Beverly de la Bretonne
Bindu Bhutani*
BKCM
Brenda Parker Bullis
Camilla and Family*
Carol Dallinger*
Carol Gwen Kiefer
Carol Ourada
Carol Waldvogel
Carrie Reuning-Hummel*
Cathryn Lee*
Cecilia Calvelo-Hopkins
Charles Krigbaum*
Christie Felsing
Christine Goodner
Christopher Fiore
Christy Paxton
Colleen Fitzgerald
Connie Heim Stambaugh
Daniel Gee*
Deena Shapiro
DFWWOW Suzuki Institute*
Diane Slone*
Domenick and Linda Fiore*
Donna Lim*
Edward Kreitman*
Elizabeth Jones
Ellen Berry*
Ellen Kogut
Ellie LeRoux*
Emma Wardell
Erin Rushforth
Esther Fellows*
Heather Hadley
Heidi Curatolo
Holly Blackwelder Carpenter*
Irene Mitchell
Ithaca Talent Education
Janelle Severson*
Janet Janz
Jean Grieve
Jennifer Kitts Guzman
Jillienne Bowers
Joan Krzywicki
Joanna Binford*
Joyce Hodge
Julianna Chitwood*
Karyn Grove-Bruce
Kat Fritz
Kate Inie-Richards
Kathie Reed*
Kathy Fitzgerald Moser
Laura A. Woodside
Leah Zelnick
Linda Case*
Lisa Hansen*
Lisa Toner
Liz Arbus*
Loren Abramson
Lorena Luciano
Lynn McCall
Malgosia
Margot Jewell
Marie Jureit-Beamish
Marilyn Kesler*
Marilyn Montzka
Marilyn OBoyle
Marina Obukovsky
Marissa Murphy*
Marla Majett
Martine Benmann
Mary Halverson Waldo
Mary Kelly
Matching Gift
Meret Bitticks
Michael Bogomolny*
Monica Vander Baan
Nancy Lokken

Happy Birthday Dr. Shinichi Suzuki

Nancy Yamagata
Nicolette A Solomon
Nora Grafton*
Pat D'Ercole
Ramona Stirling
Rebecca Sandrok
Rolando Freitag
Rumi Shimasaki
Ruth Engle Larner*
Sally Gross
Sandra McWalter Payton
Sarah Bylander Montzka*
Sarah Hersh
Sarah Richardson*
Sarah Smale*
Satoko Robert*
Shana Guidi*
Sherry Cadow
Shirley Jamison Star
Shu-Yi Scott*
SIUE Suzuki Program*
Susan Baer
Susan Heisner
Susan Moinester
Susan Montzka McDonald
Susan Vaughan
Suzuki Assoc. of Indiana*
Suzuki Institute Dallas*
Suzy Perelman
Tal Schifter
Teri Einfeldt*
Terri Patkin
The School for Strings*
The Turchyn Family
Thi, Lang & Vien*
Triangle Music School
Wan Tsai Chen*
Wendy Azrak
Wendy Seravalle-Smith
William Hurd*
Winifred Crock*
Yumi Kendall



*Super Sweet donation of $118 or more

SAA Institutes: Preliminary List

(See the SAA website for listings of new institutes and other updates.)

Alberta
Borealis Suzuki Winds Institute
Edmonton, Alberta
August 18 to August 26
www.suzuki-flute-recorder.ca

British Columbia
Langley Community Music School Suzuki Workshop
Langley, British Columbia
July 16 to July 20
www.langleymusic.com

Suzuki Valhalla Institute
New Denver, British Columbia
August 4 to August 11
valhallafinearts.org/home/suzuki-valhalla-institute/

Newfoundland
Newfoundland and Labrador Suzuki Institute
St. John's, Newfoundland
June 24 to June 30
suzukinl.ca

Nova Scotia
Nova Scotia Suzuki Violin Institute
Halifax, Nova Scotia
August 7 to August 11

Ontario
Great Lakes Suzuki Flute Institute
Hamilton, Ontario
July 7 to July 15
www.greatlakessuzuki.com

Southwestern Ontario Suzuki Institute
Waterloo, Ontario
August 12 to August 20
www.mysosi.ca

Quebec
Institut Suzuki Montréal
Montréal, Quebec
July 22 to July 30
www.suzukimontreal.org

Alaska
Fairbanks Suzuki Institute
Fairbanks, Alaska
May 30 to June 4
www.suzukifairbanks.com

Suzuki Association of Southcentral Alaska Institute
Anchorage, Alaska
June 3 to June 11
www.alaskasuzuki.org

Arizona
Chaparral Suzuki Academy
Prescott, Arizona
June 14 to June 17
chaparralsuzuki.com

Arkansas
Ozark Suzuki Institute
Siloam Springs, Arkansas
July 14 to July 22
www.ozarksuzukiinstitute.org

California
Advanced Suzuki Institute at Stanford
Palo Alto, California
August 6 to August 10
www.advancedsuzukiinstitute.com

HNU Suzuki Teacher Training Institute
Oakland, California
July 10 to August 2
www.summersuzukihnu.com

Los Angeles Suzuki Institute
Claremont, California
June 17 to June 25
www.lasuzukiinstitute.com

Northern California Suzuki Institute
Santa Rosa, California
July 10 to July 14
www.ncasuzukiinstitute.org

Colorado
Colorado Suzuki Institute
Beaver Creek, Colorado
June 10 to June 25
www.coloradosuzuki.org

Peaks to Plains Suzuki Institute
Westminster, Colorado
July 17 to July 21
www.ppsicolorado.com

Connecticut
Hartt Suzuki Institute
West Hartford, Connecticut
July 28 to August 5
www.hartford.edu/hcd

District of Columbia
Greater Washington Suzuki Institute
Washington, District of Columbia
June 24 to July 3
www.stringinstitute.com

Florida
Florida Music Institute
Saint Petersburg, Florida
June 10 to June 16
www.floridamusicinstitute.com

Georgia
Atlanta Suzuki Institute
Roswell, Georgia
June 15 to June 23
www.atlantasuzuki.org

Idaho
Idaho Suzuki Institute
Caldwell, Idaho
June 24 to July 2
www.idahosuzuki.org

Illinois
Chicago Suzuki Institute
Deerfield, Illinois
July 1 to July 9
chicagosuzukiinstitute.org

DePaul Community Music Division Suzuki Teacher Workshop
Chicago, Illinois
July 17 to July 21
music.depaul.edu/cmd

Indiana
I AM Festival
Indianapolis, Indiana
July 15 to July 23
www.indyamfest.org

Kansas
Absolutely Ottawa!
Ottawa, Kansas
June 3 to June 16
www.ottawasuzukistrings.org

Kentucky
University of Louisville Suzuki String Institute
Louisville, Kentucky
June 11 to June 16
louisville.edu/music/outreach/suzuki-studies/suzuki-string-institute

Louisiana
Acadiana Suzuki Strings Institute
Broussard, Louisiana
May 29 to June 3
www.esacadiana.com/assi

Maine
New England Suzuki Institute
Standish, Maine
June 25 to July 1
www.newenglandsuzukiinstitute.org

Michigan
Ann Arbor Suzuki Guitar Institute
Ann Arbor, Michigan
June 3 to June 30
www.institute.arborguitar.org

Blue Lake Suzuki Family Camp
Twin Lake, Michigan
June 13 to June 25
www.bluelake.org/suzuki

PhoenixPhest Grande Suzuki Institute
Ypsilanti, Michigan
July 28 to August 5
www.phoenixensemble.com

Minnesota
Lake Sylvia Suzuki Flute and Recorder Institute
St Paul, Minnesota
June 14 to June 18
www.lakesylviaflutes.org

MacPhail Center for Music
Minneapolis, Minnesota
July 21 to July 28
www.macphail.org/for-youth/suzuki-talent-education/

Missouri
St. Louis Suzuki Piano Institute
Maryland Heights, Missouri
July 24 to July 28
stlsuzukipiano.tripod.com

Montana
Montana Suzuki Institute
Missoula, Montana
July 8 to July 15
mtsuzukistrings.org

New Hampshire
Ogontz Suzuki Institute
Lisbon, New Hampshire
July 2 to July 12
www.ogontzsuzukiinstitute.com

New York
Ithaca College Suzuki Institute
Ithaca, New York
June 25 to July 7
www.ithaca.edu/suzuki

Westchester Suzuki Institute
Purchase, New York
June 4 to June 28
www.westchestersuzukiinstitute.com

North Carolina
North Carolina Suzuki Institute
Greenville, North Carolina
July 7 to July 15
www.ecu.edu/music/suzuki/

Ohio
Columbus Suzuki Piano Workshops
Columbus, Ohio
June 12 to June 30

Suzuki Music Columbus Summer Institute
Westerville, Ohio
June 10 to June 18
www.suzukimusiccolumbus.org

Oregon
Northwest Suzuki Institute
Eugene, Oregon
July 31 to August 4
www.northwestsuzukiinstitute.org

Oregon Suzuki Institute
Newberg, Oregon
June 24 to June 30
www.oregonsuzukiinstitute.org

Pennsylvania
Greater Pittsburgh Suzuki Institute
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
August 5 to August 13
www.pghsuzukiinstitute.com

Pennsylvania Suzuki Institute
Wormleysburg, Pennsylvania
July 22 to July 30
PennsylvaniaSuzukiInstitute.org

Tennessee
East Tennessee Suzuki Flute Institute
Johnson City, Tennessee
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www.intermountainsuzukistring-institute.com

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Sharing Dr. Suzuki's Message of World Harmony through Music

By Lauren Eastlack, Doris and William Preucil, Sandy Reuning, David Levine, and Mary Cay Neal

I had the privilege of a growing up as a student of Mary Cay Neal in the Buffalo Suzuki Strings program. After I finished graduate school, I followed my heart back to Buffalo. I know that I speak for all of Mary Cay's current and past students when I say that she is a treasured and beloved mentor to all who have the opportunity to benefit from her wisdom and love.

Mrs. Neal believes in all of her students, even when we do not believe in ourselves. She is not just our violin teacher; she is invested in all aspects of our lives, cheering us on to be our best selves. Many of Mrs. Neal's students have gone on to a life in music; others have gone on to be doctors, lawyers, teachers, and business people. Regardless of profession, there is no doubt that Mrs. Neal has had a major influence upon her students' successes, simply because she always believed in us.

Mrs. Neal helped us discover individual and collective excellence. She taught us that true enjoyment of music comes from every person participating at their highest level. She helped us understand that going on concert tours was a privilege and that we had to work to earn the opportunity.

Mrs. Neal's love for her past and current students is deep and unconditional. The profound impact that she leaves upon each and every single one of her students all stems from a foundation of love.

– Lauren Eastlack, Buffalo Suzuki Strings Assistant Executive Director

Photo by L. Abramson

David Levine, Mary Cay Neal and Lauren Eastlack

Mary Cay's life-long commitment to the Suzuki method started in the late 1960s when Suzuki himself came to Project Super at the Eastman School. As an active teacher trainer, she carries on the Suzuki legacy, relating to younger generations her personal recollections of Dr. Suzuki's teaching.

Mary Cay has always done her part to spread knowledge of Suzuki internationally, as well as developing friendships and collaborations with foreign Suzuki programs. Through these "Friendship Tours," Mary Cay has not only demonstrated the fine accomplishments of these Suzuki-trained students, but the beautiful hearts that these teen-aged ambassadors have developed. Mary Cay's tours inspired us to take our school on its first international tour in 1991. We are sure that her wonderful accomplishments in so many areas of what it means to be a Suzuki teacher will continue to inspire many.

– Doris and William Preucil, Preucil School of Music

My wife, Joan, and I met Mary Cay in the very early days after Dr. Suzuki's initial tour with ten Japanese students in 1964. She was so excited about the implication of Suzuki's education for this country and eager to learn as much as possible. We met fairly often, visiting her home in Buffalo, sharing ideas and working with her students.

What a joy then through the years to observe the quality of teaching grow under Mary Cay's

Mary Cay Neal and Dr. Suzuki

leadership. Her influence in the greater Buffalo community has been very successful, with strong teaching faculty and dedicated Suzuki families.

– Sandy Reuning, Ithaca Talent Education

In 1996, fresh out of graduate school, I moved to Buffalo and started teaching in a program I thought would be a good step on the way to bigger and better things. As I'm about to start my twentieth year teaching at BSS, I understand that bigger and better was in Buffalo all along, thanks to Mary Cay.

Mary Cay is deeply committed to the care and development of each component of the Suzuki Triangle. By getting to know each student, Mary Cay helps to find the most effective ways to motivate them. She also gets to know our BSS parents and is always willing to conference with any parent about their child. Mary Cay is dedicated to nurturing the teachers of BSS, and is always available for consultations and training for her faculty. Mary Cay's passionate leadership for students, parents and teachers has led to continued excellence throughout the 47 year history of Buffalo Suzuki Strings.

In addition to her work in Buffalo, Mary Cay has been continuously active in the national and international Suzuki communities. She has served three terms on the SAA Board of Directors, presented many times at SAA conferences, and has taught at several international Suzuki conventions. As an SAA Registered Teacher Trainer, Mary Cay has trained and mentored countless Suzuki violin teachers in Buffalo, the United States and across the globe.

In 1983, Mary Cay attended the International Suzuki Convention in Matsumoto. During a moving speech to teachers, Dr. Suzuki shared his vision that all children in the world deserve to have happiness through music. He asked that each teacher share his message, and it was at that moment that Mary Cay's vision for the BSS Friendship Touring Ensemble was born. In the spring of 1984 Mary Cay made her first trip with the ensemble, sharing Dr. Suzuki's vision and BSS's message of "World Harmony Through Music." Over the past 32 years, the BSS Friendship Touring Ensemble has traveled to 21 countries on six continents.

Mary Cay has been committed to preserving and promoting Dr. Suzuki's legacy in Western New York, and her dedication to excellence has made a lasting impact on the lives of children, parents and teachers throughout the world. Mary Cay Neal has lived a life dedicated to Suzuki education, and we are honored to present to her the Creating Learning Community Award.

– David Levine, Buffalo Suzuki Strings Assistant Music Director

I am still smiling as I recall how surprised I was to hear David Levine saying, "Will Mary Cay Neal please come to the stage." Standing up there surrounded by my former students, BSS teachers and colleagues from around the world, my heart was filled with gratitude as I heard them thanking *me* for creating the learning community at Buffalo Suzuki Strings that has been flourishing for 47 years. As they spoke, I was thinking how thankful I am everyday to Dr. Suzuki and so many of my colleagues for inspiring me to pass it on!

– Mary Cay Neal

Creating Learning Community: Sandy Reuning

By Carrie Reuning-Hummel

The award for Sandy Reuning, even though he did not yet realize it, began with the piano concerto competition winner, Henry From, performing the Piano Concerto No. 12 in A Major by Mozart with the Ithaca Talent Education faculty. Sandy played in the orchestra, his son-in-law George Myers conducted, and the Ithaca Talent Education faculty and Ithaca College Suzuki Pedagogy graduates past and present made up the rest of the group. Current ITE faculty included Christine and Augusto Diemecke, Sarah Cummings, Kirsten Marshall, Kathy McHugh, and Jennifer Reuning Myers, with Zachary Sweet as stage manager of the event and Jan Butler in the audience.

When that portion of the concert was complete, the audience heard a recording of the Sandy's Heifetz violin tour group playing the first movement of the Eccles Sonata. Sandy and Joan were surprised by the arrival of all four of their children

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Photo by L. Abramson

Sandy and Joan Reuning

Reuning, continued from p. 15

and children's spouses and most of the grandchildren on stage!

I then painted a picture of Sandy's life. The Eccles that we heard at the beginning was the very same piece that Sandy and his wife Joan heard from the first Japanese tour group that came to the US in 1964. They were so moved by the experience that they made the decision to devote their life to teaching using the Suzuki method. They started the first class of students immediately, and later traveled extensively with their four performing children to demonstrate Suzuki principles.

I proceeded to share the arc of his life: his heart, courage, and extraordinary vision. I also shared Joan's contributions, saying, "Joan is fearless, energetic—a fabulous violin teacher as well as pianist to this day with my dad's Heifetz tour group. They are an amazing team with a shared vision, and she is absolutely the engine that powers their commitment."

I linked Sandy's love of gardening with the seeds that he has planted along the way these 53 years—always following Dr. Suzuki's strongest ideals and always following the tone, which had captivated my dad from the first moments of hearing the Eccles.

After painting a picture of the early days, I turned over the remembrances to Mark Bjork, who just the day before had retired as professor of violin and pedagogy at the University of Minnesota. He shared memories of the '70s during the time that Sandy was president of the SAA.

Mark was followed by Teri Einfeldt, who was mentored by Sandy and Joan, taught at Ithaca Talent Education, and now is the chair of the Suzuki department and adjunct professor at the Hartt School, the University of Hartford. She included the following that she and her late husband David learned from Sandy:

"You taught us to respect children, to keep the child at the center of everything, to teach to the child standing before us.

You taught us if the child is not making progress, it is not the child's fault, but rather the teacher together with the parent not choosing the right path for that individual.

You passed on to us very strongly Dr. Suzuki's belief of character first, ability second; the importance of parent education and parent/ teacher communication; and the importance of building a child's self-confidence.

You shared the importance of review and listening and how successful one can be if one spends more time doing these two concepts than the amount of time practicing their newest piece.

You have taught us that good teaching is good teaching no matter what method and to be respectful to all colleagues.

By example, you showed us how important it is to take the time to develop wonderful tone, to play with our fullest, richest, roundest sound, never playing down to the child.

You insisted we demonstrate more and talk less.

You taught us how important it is that the tone should reach out from your heart to that of another individual's.

You taught us the true meaning of one step at a time, mastery learning. To make sure to celebrate each step, no matter how small.

You shared everything you learned from Dr. Suzuki with us and how important it is for us to share this with the next generation of teachers.

In addition to all of the above, you gave us a solid technical background and made sure we understood all teaching points within the repertoire. Through repetition and review we learned many lessons.

Lastly, you taught us to appreciate nature, the beauty of the world that surrounds us, for without appreciating what is around us and what happens around us, we may lose our sense of awareness, wonderment and awe and lose the ability to think like a child.

Our deepest appreciation goes to you Sandy Reuning, for sharing your life work with energy, enthusiasm and love.

As Sensei has been quoted as saying, 'Where love is deep, much can be accomplished!'

Sandy, you have accomplished an enormous amount!

With love and deep appreciation for every life you have touched through the Suzuki method."

I finished by saying,

"Today at 81, my dad is still passionate about his students, the violin, and tone. He is the director of Ithaca Talent Education, including his beloved Heifetz tour group, as well as the Ithaca Suzuki Institute. He adores his family, including nine grandchildren. I consider my dad a master gardener of Suzuki's principles. He has touched countless lives. Please stand if you have been impacted by Sandy Reuning, directly or indirectly. I hope the story I was able to share tonight inspires us all to bring the extraordinary to our seemingly ordinary lives."

Sandy's granddaughter, Sophie Burge, then presented him with the Creating Learning Community Award, which read, "Sandy Reuning, for nurturing and sharing Suzuki's gift of 'beautiful tone, beautiful heart.'"

International Ensembles

By Zachary Sweet

It was my honor to serve as co-coordinator of this year's International Ensemble concert at the SAA conference in Minneapolis this past May.

The concert has been a highlight in the past, and this year was especially moving through the overwhelming talent of Guitar Ensemble Suzuki-Ollin, Aber Center Suzuki Voice Troupe and the Chicago Consort. A "standing room only" crowd gathered to watch children of all ages, ethnicities, and religious affiliations perform on one stage, together, a program of diverse musical genre.

As I have reflected on the concert over these past months, it seems to me that spirit of music and friendship is more relevant now than ever before. Is it any wonder then, that the words of Pablo Casals continue to ring true?

"Perhaps music will save the world"

That evening was an example to those in attendance, and indeed the world, how people with a common goal and a loving spirit can alter the community around them.

Guitar Ensamble Suzuki-Ollin

The Guitar Ensamble Suzuki-Ollin is made up of children and young people ranging from 8 to 17 years old. It consists of two groups of students who came together to play for the Minneapolis Conference. All are Mexican, born in Mexico City and Cuernavaca City in Morelos. After 3 to 7 years of study, all have advanced to achieve a high technical performance level. The project began in 2004 within the School of Initiation to Music and Dance Ollin Yoliztli, a unique public institution in Mexico City. Soon after, teachers Victor Gardoqui and Joaquin Olivares opened Suzuki Guitar Studios and after 10 years of work, we are able to present some of the more advanced students of the three schools. Professor Victor Gardoqui was born in Mexico City, has developed a busy concert career with Guitar Quartet Manuel M. Ponce and has recorded five discs on major labels. He has taught Suzuki since 2006 and is founder of the Center of Musical Arts Scherzino. Professor Joaquín Olivares, also in Mexico City, is the founder of the Suzuki Guitar program in the Ollin Yoliztli School and in the Cedros College. The first Suzuki Guitar techer in Mexico, he is also the founder of the Children's Guitar Orchestra Ollin Yoliztli and Suzuki Olivares Academy. Olivares is a member of Guitar Quartet Mexico City with whom he has a busy, successful concert career.

Their International Ensembles Concert program featured Tierra Mestiza (Gerardo Tamez), Palladio (Karl Jenkins), and Percuson (Gerardo Tamez).

Aber Center Suzuki Voice Troupe

The "Tapestry of Songs" performed by the Aber Center Suzuki Voice Troupe includes classical and folk vocal literature woven into a concert. This Troupe was founded in 2010 at the University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point Aber Suzuki Center by Mary Hofer, Suzuki Voice Specialist and Teacher Trainer. The troupe has performed at the 2014 SAA Conference and throughout central Wisconsin at numerous schools, churches, nursing homes, and at other community functions. The "Tapestry of Songs" is an educational program developed to enhance Suzuki Voice student experiences with music and art, share their accomplishments, and heighten their spirit of generosity. "Tapestries" is threaded with music from different time periods, from countries around the world, in original languages, all the while making valuable cultural connections for the students and their audiences. In addition, a great sense of enjoyment and camaraderie has developed among its members!

Chicago Consort

The Chicago Consort is one of the country's premier student performing ensembles. Since its founding in 1983 the Consort has performed extensively on the world stage. Under the musical direction of Thomas Wermuth, the group has performed concerts and workshops throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, South America and China. They have produced three music videos for the Centel Cable Network System and were selected by audition to perform at the National Conference of the Suzuki Association of the Americas in 1992, 1996, 2000, and 2004. In December of 2004 the Chicago Consort was invited to perform at the prestigious Midwest Clinic - An International Band and Orchestra Conference. In addition to presenting live concerts both here and abroad, the group has recorded four compact discs. In addition to Wermuth, Chicago Consort leadership includes executive director Edward Kreitman and pianist Melissa Zindel.

Their program featured Asturias Isaac Albania (arr. Dean Marshall), violin solo by Amelia Korbitz; Sway Pablo Ruiz (arr. Wermuth), violin solo by Seamus Masterson; Mi Mancherai (Theme from Il Postino) Luis Bacalov (arr. Kreitman/Wermuth), violin solo by Anna Smith; and Capriccio Espagnole Rimsky-Korsakov (arr. Wermuth): *Alborado, Scena e canto gitano, Fandango asturiano,* violin solos by Anna Smith, Kevin Trickey, and Aditi Prakash.

Piano Concerto

Henry's Thoughts on the Piano Concerto Performance

By Henry From and Milton From

Also featured during the International Ensembles Concert was the Piano Concerto performance by Henry From. From performed Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 12 in A Major, K. 414, 1st movement—Allegro, and was accompanied by Ithaca Talent Education Faculty and Friends Orchestra. George Myers served as conductor.

"Working with Henry From was a great pleasure. Despite his youth, he was as prepared to play his concerto as any musician I've met and gave a performance that was as musical and moving as it was polished. This being his first performance with an orchestra, he was eager to learn the various protocols (shaking hands with the concertmaster, how to make a graceful entrance and exit, etc.) and in the performance he moved through all of these as if he'd done them all his life. I know the opportunity meant a lot for him, and it was a joyful experience for me as well to meet this remarkable young man."

– George Myers, Conductor

How did you prepare for the SAA concerto competition?

I'd been wanting to play a concerto with an orchestra for at least two years but I didn't know how to go about arranging it. I was really excited when I found out that the SAA was having a concerto competition. My piano teacher, Donna Lee, encouraged me to enter. I started working on the Mozart Concerto over the summer. This was something outside of my regular piano lessons and so I signed up for additional lessons with a pianist, Michelle Mares, who I had studied with at a summer institute. She helped me so much with technical and musical aspects of the piece! I really tried to work hard at the concerto because I knew this was my first chance to play with an orchestra. We worked for three months, polishing, and polishing, and then in December we made three recordings. I picked the one I felt was the best, we sent it to the SAA, and I crossed my fingers!

Can you describe the experience of playing at the SAA Concerto event?

It was fun! I came to Minneapolis very excited but not knowing what to expect. I soon realized everything was ten times better than I would have ever imagined. The piano that I was to play on was beautiful! Everybody there was so nice and welcoming to me. The orchestra was fantastic, they sounded so good! And the conductor, George Myers, was terrific; he was very easy to communicate with. We discussed little details like coming on stage, shaking hands with the concertmaster and conductor, and coming in and out of my cadenza. I was a little bit nervous the night of the performance but that went away once I started playing. The SAA event was extra special because almost everyone in the audience was a musician. So I felt everyone was really listening and really appreciative. I am so glad I found out about the SAA concerto event and was able to realize my dream!

What did you learn from the SAA concerto event?

I feel that the SAA event was a great place for me to learn about playing with an orchestra. I knew that even if I made a mistake people would be supportive and encouraging. George Myers talked with me about how the orchestra was there to help me play better. And that's what I felt when I was playing. Even though I didn't know anyone in the orchestra, playing with them felt like a conversation with friends. I listened carefully and they listened carefully. They kind of amplified the dynamics and phrasing that I put into my playing. Preparing for the SAA concerto competition was also a learning experience; I learned what to focus on and how to practice efficiently. It paid off because later in the year I won my second concerto competition, and I am now getting ready to play Beethoven's 3rd Piano Concerto in a couple of weeks. Thank you, SAA!

Henry From has studied piano at the Vancouver Academy of Music (VAM) with Donna Lee-Leung since he was five years old. Many other musicians have taught and inspired him as well. He studies violin with Sandra Payton, with whom he started lessons at age three and a half. Other regular teachers include Edward Top (composition), Andrew Dawes (chamber

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George Myers, conductor, with Henry From

Piano Concerto, continued from p. 19

music), Kathleen Allan (voice), Amanda Chan (piano), and Michelle Mares (piano). He has also been lucky enough to play in masterclasses by Richard Goode, Ian Parker, Joyce Yang, the Shanghai Quartet, the Apollon Musagete Quartett, and he has taken piano lessons from Lee Kum Sing, Jeffrey Gilliam, David Moroz, Krzysztof Jablonski, Ethel Fang, and Merlin Thompson.

Henry has received several VAM awards for his piano playing. These include the Malcolm G. Aikman Scholarship (2016), the Edith Lando Gifted Youth Scholarship (2015), and the Marguerite M. Echaus Memorial Scholarship (2015 and 2016). Henry has also received awards for his violin playing including a full tuition scholarship for the Rosamunde Summer Academy in Winnipeg, Manitoba (2015)

Henry is an enthusiastic composer. In 2015 he won the junior category of the Vancouver Chamber Choir's Young Composer's Competition for his piece for choir and piano entitled *Life is but a Dream*. This piece was debuted by the Vancouver Chamber Choir and subsequently performed by the Vancouver Bach Youth Choir. He has also had his works played in public performances at the Sonic Boom Festival in Vancouver, the Washington State Music Teachers Convention and by several chamber music ensembles in the lower Mainland.

Samantha Hiller, Emmett Drake, Frank Viola, Erin Keepe, Teri Einfeldt, Osmo Vänskä

Henry participates in chamber music at VAM throughout the academic year. In both 2015 and 2016 his ensembles were invited to take part in the finals of the Vancouver Friends of Chamber Music Young Musicians Competition. Last year his piano trio was awarded 2nd prize in this competition for their performance of the Haydn Piano Trio in G Major (the "Gypsy").

Henry has completed his grade nine and ten Royal Conservatory of Music practical piano examinations with First Class Honours and will be taking his Associate of the Royal Conservatory (ARCT) exam this year.

Henry's interests outside of music include geography, reading stories, gardening, cooking, and helping to take care of his family's chickens.

Suzuki Young Artists String Ensemble

By Samantha Hiller, Wendy Seravalle-Smith, and Kirsten Marshall

An amazing group of young string musicians ages 13 to 16 came from all over the United States and Canada to work with conductor Kirsten Marshall at the SAA conference. They began rehearsals on Friday morning, and efficiently prepared for their performance on Sunday, which included Dag Wiren's Serenade for String Orchestra (movements one, two, and four), Psalm and Fugue by Hovhaness, and Rhythm Dances by Brian Balmages.

Having the chance to watch conductor Kirsten Marshall in rehearsals was inspiring for home ensemble teaching. Kirsten encouraged engagement in the music through many effective approaches: imagery, singing, information about the background and era of the composer, humour, and demonstrations on her violin. She worked efficently to be sure each section was proficient on the students' part, but also to foster complete ensemble awareness: "You might want to have an ear on what is happening in other sections and ask, 'Does this apply to me?'" "We are in the realm of what is possible. It is beautiful but can it be 15 percent better?" The result was the realization of the potential of these students.

A highlight for SYASE was the visit of Osmo Vanska, the conductor of the Minnesota Orchestra. He addressed the students first, complimenting them on how well they played: "You sound much beyond your years." He talked about his background, having studied violin then clarinet, before pursuing conducting; his inspirations were Bernstein and Toscanini, among others. The SYASE members prepared some questions for him. He talked about the importance of being very good on your instrument if you want to join an orchestra, but more importantly, being a good person who can work well with others. Social skills are very important, and by playing in a youth orchestra or community orchestra, these abilities are being developed and will be important whether or not you become a professional musician. He talked about being aware of who is important in the orchestra at any given moment and to always listen to each other. As a conductor, he has a vision of what he wants, but the work is to bring together all the varied ideas and visions of the individual musicians, in order to create one uniform vision and an excellent performance. When asked what his "pet peeve" is as a conductor, he said that he did not like when musicians he works with do not change or fix things already mentioned.

Appropriately, after the time with Osmo Vanska, there was a plan for SYASE to eat their lunch together and have a social time before resuming rehearsal again.

About the experience, first violinist Ellie Sievers from Ontario said,

"In Minneapolis, I had a wonderful experience playing with other students who share my passion for music in SYASE conducted by Kirsten Marshall. I made new friends and also saw friends from two years ago.

One of my favorite moments was when the maestro of the Minnesota Orchestra came to visit us. We asked him lots of questions about what it takes to play successfully in an orchestra.

Another great experience was listening to other members of SYASE play in masterclasses. I loved listening to the clinicians play at a concert and learning from them.

Osmo Vänskä with members of SYASE

I enjoyed being at the SAA conference in Minneapolis and hope to go back in two years!"

It was an honor to be involved with the SYASE as a part of the conference committee. *– Samantha Hiller and Wendy Seravalle-Smith*

A few weeks ago I went through a box simply labeled "Suzuki." I was delighted to uncover a series of correspondences with David Einfeldt as he planned the first North American Suzuki Orchestra at the 1996 SAA Conference in Chicago. David was thrilled to present just how amazing a Suzuki-trained orchestra would sound—gorgeous tone, beautiful intonation, and heartfelt phrasing. (There may also have been a rousing bah humbug in those notes for those still under the fog of misconception that "Suzuki students can't read.") Fast forward 20 years later, and witness how powerfully Suzuki training can flourish in the orchestral setting.

The students of the Suzuki Young Artists String Ensemble (SYASE acronym pronounced "see-YAH-see") arrived at the first rehearsal with eyes glowing in anticipation. The excitement was palpable, and I knew from the first bowstroke that this was an extraordinary group. Every member had prepared to a very high level. The music poured into the air in a golden river of sound. Together, we shaped that current. We explored how teamwork manifests in an orchestra. What can an individual do to contribute to the greater good? Does one person's effort really matter? Yes, it does. Dr. Suzuki's vision of growing admirable hearts was present in every rehearsal. It takes a noble character to yield one's powerful tone when it is another section's melody.

SYASE was fortunate to enjoy a visit by Maestro Osmo Vanska, the music director of the Minnesota Orchestra. He answered questions from the students about what kind of music he enjoyed, the rehearsal process for professionals, and even his favorite kind of food. It was a treat for the students, after hearing the fabulous Minnesota Orchestra concert on Thursday evening, to meet the man behind the music.

Many thanks are offered to the parents and home teachers for raising such wonderful musicians and people. Thanks also to the coordinators Samantha Hiller and Wendy Seravalle-Smith for their behind-the-scenes work that made it all happen. The concert was indeed thrilling, and I am renewed in my belief that the Suzuki philosophy has a place in orchestras. Thank you, David, for showing us the way.

– Kirsten Marshall

Chamber Music at the Conference

"Having the opportunity to play Chamber Music combines the best of a well-rounded Suzuki student. A strong technical foundation, coupled with a musical and intellectual approach to the instrument prepares the child to start creating his own musical community by communicating through the art of music. Being exposed to the coaching of former Suzuki students who are now professional musicians is a true inspiration and drives the motivation to continue with chamber music for the rest of one's life and to provide the environment to meet people with similar goals and values." —Teri Einfeldt

After a truly memorable, engaging four days, commencing with Erin Keefe's performance of the Brahms Violin Concerto with the Minnesota Orchestra on Thursday evening, Erin bookended the weekend sessions on Monday morning as Chamber Music clinician. The first group to perform was "Quottro Formaggi" from the Hartt School Suzuki program, coached by Carmen Irons. The quartet performed the Schubert Minuet and Trio, with Natalie Wong and Prairwaa Madden, violins; Daniel Wang, viola; and Christopher Hill, cello.

My group was thrilled to be chosen for the conference chamber music master class with Erin Keefe. It greatly motivated them to polish their piece and take it to the next level. Erin was gracious in her interaction with them, and gave them insightful comments and effective rehearsal techniques. Our thanks to the SAA for this rewarding opportunity! —Linda Judiesch

"Erin Keefe really helped add maturity to our sound by focusing on musicality and character. The experience was very valuable; the opportunity to watch other young violinists and teachers work together was very special."

—Prairwaa Madden

"The experience with Ms. Keefe was wonderful and enriching. She gave the group new insight on playing with each other and interpreting

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Suzuki Youth Orchestra of the Americas

SYOA 1

By Julie Bamberger Roubik

Another amazing conference, another mind-blowing performance by young people who came together for the first time from all over North America for an electrifying and inspiring performance. From the very first day at check-in, the students' excitement was palpable. SYOA 1 co-coordinators Christy Paxton and Julie Bamberger Roubik assisted the students in rehearsals, led sectionals, and helped with the various needs of the families. During their downtime, students explored the various attractions in the Twin Cities (the Mall of America proving very popular) and took advantage of hotel swimming pool.

SYOA 1 performed Contradanse (A. Salieri, ed. Fendler), Air and Dance (M.L. Daniels), Two Hungarian Folk Songs (B. Bartok, ar. Applebaum) and Fiddle Dance (P. Fletcher). Led by expert educator Marilyn Kesler, the students played with skill, musicality, and poise far beyond their years.

In the course of a few days, the students participated in rehearsals, sectionals, and various other activities, resulting in a final performance at the Minneapolis Convention Center worthy of a standing ovation. Every session was filled with laughter, joy and the tone of beautiful hearts. We hope that the families of SYOA 1 went home with new-found inspiration and memories that will last a lifetime.

Parent Perspectives

Attending the SAA Conference 2016 in Minneapolis was a great experience for us. From the first rehearsal to the last rehearsal, we were able to grasp the full experience of preparing the pieces our children have been learning and practicing and see it to its fruition at the concert on Sunday brought tears and chills. The children played so beautiful on the day of the concert—and as one! Our conductor, Ms. Kesler, was patient and funny and a great teacher. The children were so eager to learn and please her and themselves and their peers. As a bass player parent, I was in awe of how personable everybody was and wanted to learn about each other and help each other. Just seeing other performances from other bass players allowed me to see the differences in styles but also recognize the common goal of creating a beautiful sound from the instrument. Although we attended several bass classes, I would love to see and attend more classes for the bass players. Our son walked away with a new experience and appreciation for his musical skills and a new drive to learn even more and do more with his instrument. He has set more goals for himself for next year and into the future. That in itself was rewarding and yes, we will do it again, and yes, we would recommend the experience for others! *–Kaneshia, SYOA 1 Parent*

We had a great time. The conductor, Marilyn, helped to light a beautiful flame in my daughter. Philomena loved her orchestral experience. When we came home, she immediately starting practicing for her audition with the Detroit Metropolitan Youth Symphony. She is currently the assistant viola in the Strings Orchestra of the DMYS. Thank you and see you next time.

– Diahann, SYOA 1 Parent

SYOA was such a positive and motivating experience for Brendan. First, was invaluable for him to be able to play in an orchestra with peers at his level of playing ability. Because the music was at a level that mostly was easily mastered, they were able to to bring the artistic level up, which was very satisfying for him. The best part though, was after the concert when he asked me what book he had to be in to be able to audition for the next level orchestra for the next conference. It was well worth it!

– Beth, SYOA 1 Parent

Student Perspective

It was a good experience. My favorite part was seeing and listening to the different bass players. I enjoyed participating in the orchestra and learning new pieces. There was nothing I would change or do differently. I would like to see more bass players performing in the orchestra in future years. Yes, I will return if the opportunity presents itself. Yes, I would recommend the experience for others.

– Kyron, SYOA 1 Bass Student

SYOA 2

By Lisa Guttenberg

One of the highlights of the SAA Conference is the final performance given by the Suzuki Youth Orchestras of America. This year, SYOA 2 welcomed back director Emmett Drake for his third SAA Conference. Mr. Drake once again brought the orchestra to an extraordinary musical level in just four days. The students spent many hours together rehearsing and perfecting three works that challenged their technical and emotional understanding of the music. The students also received an opportunity to further the development of their individual parts during sectional rehearsals with several excellent SAA teachers. The result of all of these efforts culminated in a performance that inspired all in attendance.

SYOA 2 students performed St. Paul Suite, *Jig and Finale* (G. Holst), The Last Spring (E. Grieg), and Perseus (Soon Hee Newbold).

Parent Perspectives

What a great privilege to participate in the Suzuki Youth Orchestra experience. It is rare for children of this age to be able to play in an orchestra where all of the members can play at such a high level. People walking by outside were shocked when they learned that the music they heard was made by kids! Hazel is already preparing for the next conference.

– Mari Ann, SYOA 2 Parent

This trip was a great experience to me. I got to stay with my daughter for the entire five days. Amy had fun playing violin in the orchestra and meeting new friends. And we both had fun going out to have breakfast and dinner and also visit Minneapolis Institute of Art. The "We Are Suzuki!" Celebration and the Symphony in 60 are fantastic treats. *– Wei, SYOA 2 Parent*

Student Perspective

It was a great experience. I had a lot of fun and made new friends. Everyone was really nice. It was a very non-stressful "vacation" away from schoolwork where I could focus on violin.

– Amy, SYOA 2 Violin Student

Advanced Violin Performing Ensemble

By Tal Schifter

"...awesome ...eye opening experience ... inspired to play with confidence and courage." These are some reactions from participants of the Advanced Violin Performing Ensemble at the 2016 SAA Conference.

Thirteen students were chosen nationwide by audition to join together and perform at the 17th SAA Conference this past May in Minneapolis. This is the first time the SAA has featured this type of ensemble, and it was directed brilliantly by violinist Nicolas Kendall, from the critically acclaimed group Time for Three. Both Nicolette Solomon and I had the privilege of working with this wonderful group of students for the first couple of days of the conference before Mr. Kendall arrived. Though they received their music in advance, they had not rehearsed together before they all gathered in Minneapolis. Fast forward two days and several hours of intense rehearsals later, the audience was treated to a heartfelt, exciting performance by the students who ranged in age from as young as 12 and up to 18 years old. Their program featured Der Erlkönig (F. Schubert/Ernst, arr. T. Wermuth), Romance (J. Sibelius), and Taszo Tango (N. Kendall, arr. R. Moose).

Teachers often have a profound impact on the lives of their students, and this was echoed by some of the participants with their reflections on their experience. Emma Richman, a high-school senior from Minneapolis, who performed the riveting solo from Mr. Kendall's composition Taszo Tango, had this to say: "Being a part of the advanced group class with Nick Kendall was an awesome and unique experience. As a group, we were able to play a variety of pieces from lush and romantic to fiery and energetic, and even explore a more improvisational tango style. Nick was able to help us develop these distinct styles as an ensemble and allowed us to experiment with and explore our own artistic choices. Nick was not a typical group leader and really encouraged us not to hold back and inspire each other with our playing. In just

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My First Time at IRSTE: I Will Be Back

By Laura Nerenberg

This past May 2016, I took a chance on attending my first ever International Research Symposium on Talent Education, which took place slightly before and concurrently with the 17th Biennial SAA Conference. This year's was the 13th edition of the IRSTE, which was founded in 1990. A huge thank you goes to co-coordinators Pat D'Ercole and Karin Hendricks for their tireless and enthusiastic leadership.

I have wanted to attend the IRSTE for several years, but was held back by circumstances outside of my control as well as by my own misunderstanding of it—mainly that it was not an event intended for me. I could not have been more wrong. From the outset, an atmosphere of respect, collegiality and excitement reigned.

The format of the IRSTE made it so that there was something for everyone—including delicious food. Research presentations included some in masterclass format with IRSTE and SAA Conference keynote speaker Dr. Aniruddh Patel. Poster sessions included participants from all over North America and even Nigeria. While we were encouraged to read the information on the posters, it was the interactions with the presenters that made the most lasting impact on me. The enthusiasm each showed for his or her research coupled with an openness to discuss their research and experiences made for animated conversations over veggies and cheese.

We all have our own personal areas of interest, and for me, a few talks stood out as most thought-provoking.

Dr. Zachary Ebin's presentation of a pilot study went immediately to the crux of what it means to be a Suzuki teacher—which, when it comes down to it, has more to do with a philosophical than a pedagogical approach. He set out to discover whether a teacher's preconceived belief in the expected performance of a student had an impact on that student's performance outcome. Are we not, as Suzuki teachers, supposed to believe that Every Child Can Learn? How many of us take the time to consider the ramifications of that belief, or confess, if only to ourselves, that it is possible to falter in that belief. Dr. Ebin admitted his research, with a very small, self-selected sample size, was still preliminary, and was also upfront about some inherent difficulties in conducting research in this area—mainly in gathering a large enough sample size and one that is random, not self-selected. This was a pilot study after all. That said, to be confronted with an examination of one of the most basic tenets of our belief system as Suzuki teachers was highly stimulating, and is something I will likely turn over in my brain for months to come.

Lauretta Werner spoke of a topic once considered taboo among musicians, that of anxiety and stress in performance. As the trainers and coaches of musicians who are expected to perform in public, it is incumbent on us to stay current with the latest research in the field of performance anxiety and the various ways to live with it. From this interesting talk, I retained most notably a series of power stances (these can be found via a quick Google search online). Of these, the "standing-tall-with-hands-on-hips" stance seemed to be the most practical to teach ourselves and our students.

Dr. Aniruddh Patel gave an intriguing keynote: "The Origins and Power of Synchronized Movements to Music." I retained some pertinent take-homes from this talk. Namely, that moving in sync with others influences social behavior and that musical synchrony in particular increases pro-social behaviors. There could not be a more compelling argument for the immense benefit of group classes than this.

Rebecca A. Roesler gave a compelling talk about her research examining problem solving in a professional string quartet. Her meticulous research included statistics on the level of participation of each of the members of the quartet in the various fields that required improvement. What emerged was the image of a mature ensemble, comprised of four equal members, where open communication was the norm. The practical applications of this research are obvious as I play and often coach chamber music. Understanding the effective work strategies of a successful, professional chamber ensemble is an invaluable teaching and rehearsing tool.

The final talk I personally found very fascinating was the account of a study of a Belgium-based string orchestra that performed entirely from memory. As Suzuki teachers, we understand the value of memorization from the start. The study's author, Jacob M. Dakon, studied the most advanced orchestra of a memorization-based orchestra academy. He concluded that while the effort taken and anxiety produced by memorizing all the music they performed was great, the benefits the memorization yielded were great. Through interviews with the teens themselves and through observation of their training, he discovered that memorization improved their communication skills, allowed them to focus on other aspects of performance, and even stimulated creativity.

Other talks included an analysis of the teaching and training of Suzuki and traditional violin teachers with respect to injury prevention and a review of music and dyslexia. The poster presentations included the following: a study of how children's temperament affects teaching, the persistence of students in Suzuki group classes and related empathy ratings, a report on American and Canadian Suzuki programs, a study of empathy-related character traits in relation to interactive musical play in early childhood, creation of an empathy survey for Suzuki students and their parents, and parental involvement as it relates to musical progress.

My most valuable take-home from the IRSTE, the thing that has made me recommend it to colleagues constantly since this past May, is a bit of a paradox: While we often strive for certainties, I found many of the talks left me with more questions than answers—not questions of misunderstanding, but of a thirst for more research, more knowledge, more

answers and inevitably, more questions, as we continue on our journey as lifelong learners in pedagogy and music. When Pablo Casals (at age 93) was asked why he continued to practice the cello three hours a day, he replied, "I'm beginning to notice some improvement." Surely, the same can be said of us as pedagogues. The IRSTE is a vital ingredient to the continued renewal of our art and our craft as Suzuki teachers.

To learn more about the work done by the IRSTE, please read one of its articles in the *American Suzuki Journal* from recent and forthcoming issues. I invite you to learn more about the presentations from the 13th Symposium, some of which I touched on above, by visiting irste.org.

Part 6:

Parent Education in Suzuki Studios: Who offers it? Who receives it? What does it look like?

By Kathleen M. Einarson, Karin S. Hendricks, Nancy Mitchell, Elizabeth M. Guerriero, and Patricia D'Ercole

This is the sixth installment in a series of articles reporting on a large-scale demographic survey of North American Suzuki teachers. The previous article in this series examined some of the perceived challenges of group class. In this article, we will review teachers' descriptions of the parent education offerings within their studios. Teachers were asked to provide information about the structure, content, and intensity of their parent education programs. The survey questions included both initial education for new families entering their studios, as well as ongoing education for returning families.

Within our sample, 75 percent of teachers offered some form of parent education for incoming families. Teachers were able to type open-ended descriptions of their education offerings in the survey, and were given the option to describe as many types of programming as needed (as such, the responses below sum to more than 100 percent). Based on teachers' descriptions, we grouped the responses into categories for different types of experiences. Of the teachers who offered some form of initial parent education, the most common approach was to hold parent meetings or workshops (55 percent). Teachers also reported distributing reading materials (43 percent), conducting parent education within the private lesson (43 percent), having discussions between the parent and the teacher (25 percent), and having incoming families observe lessons (18 percent).

Although the number of teachers who offered parent education to new families was quite high, the number who offered ongoing parent education to families already in their studios was significantly lower: Only 50 percent of teachers reported offering continuing parent education for returning families, and the majority of those who did reported that these opportunities were "minimal." Although the educational experience for returning families was less comprehensive, the formats teachers reported using were quite similar to those for initial parent education, including meetings or workshops (55 percent), reading materials and online resources like "Parents As Partners Online" (35 percent), conducting parent education within the private lesson (25 percent), or having discussions between parent and teacher (20 percent).

Many teachers who described their initial and ongoing parent education offerings also mentioned that they struggled to find effective strategies and resources for communicating with parents. Since certain parent education resources were mentioned by name frequently (that is, mentioned by 10 or more teachers in our

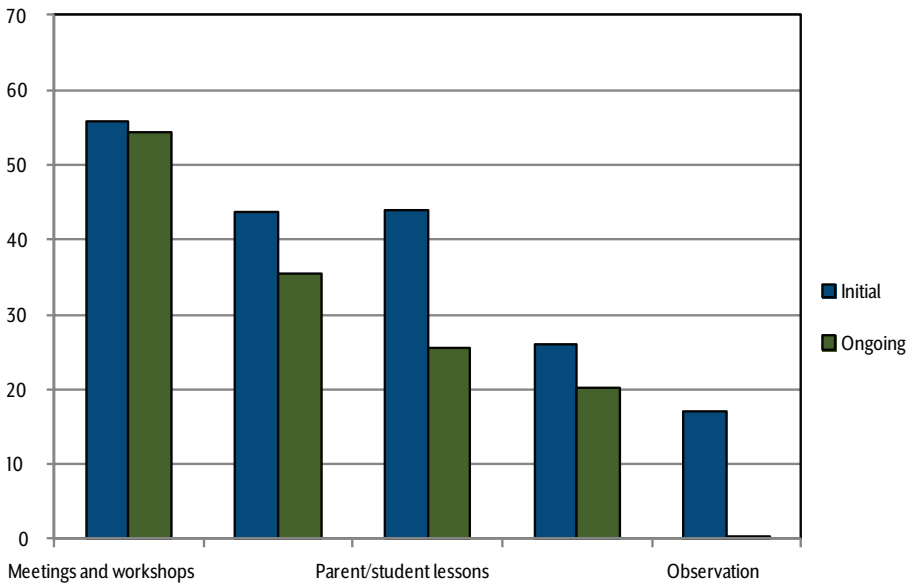

Figure 1: Format of Parent Education

(note: values will not sum to 100)

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survey), we would like to share them here. Colleagues who are interested in expanding their own education programs more may be interested in exploring the following frequently-used resources:

- SAA's *Parents as Partners Online* lecture series
- SAA's *Every Child Can* one-day introductory course
- The book *Nurtured by Love* by Shinichi Suzuki
- The book *Ability Development from Age Zero* by Shinichi Suzuki
- The manuals in the *Parent Education* series by Jean Luedke
- The book *Building Violin Skills* by Ed Sprunger (an instrument-specific resource)

In our survey we also inquired about the intensity of parent education offerings, and invited teachers to rate whether the amount of education they offered was 'Extensive,' 'Some,' or 'Minimal.' Among those teachers who reported offering either type of experience, intensity was noticeably higher for initial parent education than ongoing parent education. This suggests that even those programs that successfully offer initial training may not be able to offer ongoing support at the same intensity.

Table 1: Intensity of Parent Education
(note: values will not sum to 100)

	Extensive	Some	Minimal
Initial education	5 percent	61 percent	5 percent
Ongoing education	1 percent	37 percent	76 percent

In our previous article about the challenges of group class, we reported teachers' descriptions of the challenges and frustrations they face. Some of the most common issues included 1. parents only making time for private lessons, 2. struggling with scheduling and group class logistics when families are busy, and 3. managing parent expectations about the level or composition of group classes. We feel that one very effective way these concerns could be addressed, albeit gradually, is via parent education about Suzuki philosophy and pedagogy. It is possible that parents' inability or unwillingness to meet teachers' expectations (be they about group class attendance, or class assignments, or many other challenging aspects of managing relationships in a Suzuki studio) is attributable to misunderstandings about exactly *why* and *how* these activities are important.

Clearly, parent education that is both effective and also sustained over the cour se of a Suzuki family's journey can provide parents with the tools to be more effective members of the Suzuki triangle. More specifically, it has the potential to improve parents' understanding of the values of group class, review, listening, and other important aspects of Suzuki pedagogy. Many teachers in our survey expressed a desire to strengthen parent education, and were interested in strategies to do so. We speculate that training new teachers to offer both effective and sustained parent education has the potential to improve not only teacher satisfaction and student retention, but also teachers' ability to implement Suzuki pedagogy and philosophy. These challenges are worth consideration given the potential for increased student success, higher parent satisfaction, and more rewarding and effective teaching experiences that could result.

Advanced Violin Performing Ensemble, continued from p. 21

a few short days, Nick was able to bring our group together and create an amazing performance."

Another student, Jaehyun Kim from Great Neck, NY, shared his thoughts on how this impacted him: "This opportunity meant a lot to me. Being part of an ensemble with kids from all over America was an eye opening experience for me. It was also cool to be able to rehearse pieces with a professional violinist (Nick Kendall) who was funny and most importantly, understood that the other participants and I were there simply because we enjoyed playing the violin. I was so happy to be able to make music in an environment that was relaxed and not filled with competition and judges ready to test us on every single note (something we violinists are awfully familiar with). But besides having fun, I think this experience was also an important step on the staircase of violin playing for me: it gave me my first grasp of the real world of violinists."

Isabella Benrubi, from Northport, NY, offered her take as well on her experience: "My days at Minneapolis were some of the best days of my life. It was incredible to be around so many talented musicians that shared the same interest and passion. Whenever performances were given, the atmosphere created by the teachers and students was nothing but supportive. Teachers were extremely helpful, giving suggestions for our playing that we could use for the rest of our lives. B eing a part of the ensemble with Nick Kendall is something I will never forget. He motivated all of us to play with more energy and inspired us with his talent, to play with confidence and courage. It felt like all of us were part of a big family. I consider it a tremendous honor just simply saying that I met these amazing musicians."

After reading these personal thoughts from the participants, we can all agree that our students have a profound impact on us as well. It's clearly a two-way street. Having had the opportunity to observe Mr. Kendall's interaction with the students during the rehearsals and the performance, I concur with all of these observations. Mr. Kendall not only had the group playing from the heart, but he also taught from the heart with his deep understanding, constant encouragement, and endless positive energy. It made me proud to be a part of this wonderful Suzuki family and without a doubt, it would have made Dr. Suzuki proud as well.

Virtual Conference Sampler

The conference is months behind us, but the wisdom shared among attendees is still accessible. The Virtual Conference Sampler is a selection of videos, concerts, interviews, and all handouts that were available at the conference. It wasn't possible to record all of the hundreds of sessions given, but our Sampler has something for everyone: focused sessions on individual instruments, Suzuki Early Childhood Education, group classes, parent education, and insight into Latin American Suzuki programs, to name a few topics. Have you ever wondered:

- What was it really like to study with Dr. Suzuki? (Winifred Crock)
- How can I run a more financially successful studio? (Charles Krigbaum)
- What?! Suzuki Trumpet? (Natalie DeJong)
- How can I better manage, lead, and create in my group classes? (Teresa Hakel and Lisa Vosdoganes)
- Is it possible to successfully be both a Suzuki Teacher and a Suzuki Parent? (Stacy Smith, Brittany Gardner, and Amy Norton)
- If you are an "auditory" teacher, how do you connect with a "kinesthetic" learner? (Winifred Crock, Laurie Scott)
- Is it possible to nurture our students' curiosity and creativity beyond the music studio? (Jane Reed)
- Which conversations with parents should be held in private and which held in front of the student? (Mark Mutter)

The gems of knowledge held in these sessions speak for themselves:

- "Students must be better than their teacher, or we will be back to the cavemen in a few generations." – Shinichi Suzuki, from "More than a Method"
- "Great teachers are adept at creating an atmosphere of magical learning where mistakes happen and notes are missed, but that sometimes doesn't matter, because you are trying to hit something beyond the notes." – Matthew Loden, from "We are Suzuki"
- "It's true that the process of transitioning (to independent practicing) begins before the teen years, in fact, I would say it begins at the first lesson." – Ann Marie Novak, from "From Here to Eternity"
- "How many of us have sat on a plane next to someone who has never hear of the Suzuki Method when they ask what we do? . . . I believe that in addition to maintaining the highest professional standards we can aspire to, we also need to invest concrete time and effort in managing the image of the Suzuki Method, each one of us." – Kelly Williamson, from "Branding and the Suzuki Method: Why this matters to YOU."

Refresh your knowledge of sessions you attended, catch sessions that you missed, or see the entire offering for the first time. Get updated on and be updated on the newest ideas from your Suzuki community, and join the conversation. Visit https://suzukiassociation.org/virtual-conference/ to get started.

A Few Thoughts on Cello Hardware Helpers

Historical Perspectives

By David Evenchick

Like all the instruments of the string family, the cello has evolved through many adaptations since the times of the great Italian luthiers. It is hard for us to imagine that great cellists such as Luigi Boccherini, David Popper, Alfredo Piatti, and François Adrien Servais (in his early years), capable of such incredible virtuosic feats over the whole range of the cello, did so without an endpin. When we see images of these cellists we can see that the C peg was not really an issue.

Luigi Boccherini (1743–1805)

JL Duport (1749–1819)

Sebastian Lee (1805–1887)

Because the cello was not fixed to the floor, the player could move the cello diagonally to a placement best suited to what was being played at any given moment, so they were not fixed to a position with a permanent C peg problem.

FA Kummer (1797–1889)

Alfredo Piatti (1822–1901)

David Popper (1843–1913)

We can see from the above images that cellists with various body proportions had different adaptations to positioning. It is interesting to compare the portrait of Duport, perhaps the most significant contributor to cello pedagogy, to those of Boccherini, Lee, and Kummer. Duport's portrait shows the relationship of the pegbox, the head, and the left arm in the upper register. The advent of the endpin changed many aspects of playing, from freeing the legs to increasing the projection of the cello in large concert places.

Since Stradivari, however, the pegs themselves have not evolved much in their design. In fact, many times we will see that the C peg, because of its position as the lowest sitting peg of the peg-box, protrudes the furthest out towards the left ear. Over the last few decades, the challenge of fitting the cello in a way that does not cause distortion to the cellist's neck has been recognized as a very important teaching issue. Thankfully, there have been a few solutions, including *Posture Pegs* that have emerged.

Perhaps it is time that makers and manufacturers themselves simply redesign the C and G pegs?

You can see in the photo above how a peg can be reshaped and fitted to greatly reduce the interference of the C peg. While many cellists might not need "stubby" pegs, in the history of any given cello, there will probably be players who will benefit. And certainly this is a small adaptation compared to that of the endpin!

David Evenchick maintains a varied career as a teacher, teacher trainer and performer. He has been a faculty member of Grinnell College and The Preucil School of Music and is a frequent clinician at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto. David's appearances as an Institute teacher and cello teacher trainer have spanned the US and Canada, as well as in Latin America where he has presented courses in Lima, Perú, and Campinas, Brazil.

David has a particular interest in the research and performance of compositions of the great Croatian cello pedagogue, Rudolf Matz. He has been awarded the Anne T. Clearly Fellowship for International Doctoral Research from The University of Iowa for his study of this composer/teacher, and he continues to perform Matz's solo works frequently. David teaches at the Suzuki String School of Guelph, where he is also principal cellist of the Guelph Symphony Orchestra.

A Few Thoughts on Cello Hardware Helpers

Keypegs and Bent Endpins

By Carey Cheney, Pam Devenport, and Nancy Yamagata

Helping children acquire a comfortable, balanced sitting posture behind the cello is a challenging and ever-changing proposition. Over the last 30 years, the cello's mechanical structure has evolved dramatically and can offer more choices for how we move and position our cellos on our bodies. The Stringvision Keypeg and the bent endpin have proven to create a more optimal cello posture for particular body types.

The proportions of the cellist's torso, arms, and legs play a central role in unlocking the answers to a comfortable sitting position with the cello. Cellists with longer torsos and average to short leg length will find that when the cello is positioned in front, resting on the sternum, with the inside of the knees contacting the cello, the C peg hits the side of the head or face.

There a few ways to get around this:

1. Turn the A string towards the bow arm to move the C peg away from the head.
2. Pull the endpin farther out to raise the height of the pegbox.
3. Sit higher or lower to position the C peg away from the head.
4. Ideally, we would position the cello in exactly the right place and at the right angle as to facilitate the natural opening and closing of the arms to accommodate shifting as well as string changes.

The Keypeg

The Stringvision Keypeg, invented by Los Angeles-based cellist John Krovoza, substitutes a regular string peg with a shortened peg that has no head protruding out of the pegbox. The Keypeg is turned with a "key" that fits any Keypeg snugly and is removable (and without care, losable!) It would be wise to keep a key handy in the teaching studio and at institutes and workshops.

The Keypeg (formerly known as the "Posture Peg") is custom-fitted to the cello and should be installed by a professional luthier. It can be fitted on cellos as small as one-eighth size. Installation does not take long, but some rental shops will not install Keypegs. Since the fit is customized, either by enlarging the peg hole or shaving down the Keypeg, it is best to not remove it once installed, though it is possible. An option for very young cellists would be to remove the C peg and string until needed.

The implications for the improved position of the head, neck and shoulders using the Keypeg are enormous. A short-legged cellist with a long torso will be able to support the cello with his/her knees and will not need to move the head forwards or sideways or scrunch up the neck and shoulders to escape pesky peg stabbing. The cellist will now be able to maintain a more perpendicular string position to the floor, which will aid in fast runs up and down the strings and eliminate elbow adjustments to accommodate an angled string. Finally, cellists will have a wonderful sensation of freedom when they realize that the C peg (the most commonly replaced peg) is gone. Some teachers suggest the installation of a second Keypeg for the G string in order to remove all obstacles on that side of the peg box.

The Bent Endpin

The bent endpin, first introduced by Tortelier and popularized by Rostropovich, has many advantages. By lifting the lower bout up from the floor and projecting the sound towards the ceiling, this angled endpin enhances the cello's sound. This augmented projection is a great asset in performing concertos with an orchestra. Additionally, the flatter angle of the cello to the cellist allows the bow arm to rest on the string with more gravitational weight, resulting in a fuller sound.

Since the cello is farther from the body, the bent endpin helps very long-limbed cellists feel less cramped. The heightened level allows more room for the legs to be positioned without interfering with the bow path. There is also more space for the bow arm to fold easily when approaching the frog. Many cellists have expressed how much easier it is to play in thumb position because of the angle to the floor. The bent endpin is most beneficial to exceptionally tall and long-limbed cellists, such as those six feet and above. A small or average-sized cellist would have trouble reaching the A string with the cello at this angle.

There are many points to consider before switching to the bent endpin. The bow arm will be higher, which could put extra stress on the right shoulder, particularly the rotator cuff and deltoid muscles. The A string will be a great reach forward, especially at the tip of the bow. This may lead to dislocating the right shoulder joint. Due to the angle changes, the cellist will need to work out new bow paths for each string. With conscientious practice, however, all of these points can be reconciled.

If you are thinking of switching to a bent endpin, it is best to consult a person who uses one. Ask about their experiences and techniques—their answers will help you make a more informed decision. You can also simulate a bent endpin by placing an object under an attached rock stop strap to give the rock stop holder more height (preferably two inches).

A popular and widely used brand is Stahlhammer, from Germany. You can adjust this endpin to different angles as well as use it in a straight setting. The carbon fiber model produces a very resonant sound because of its hollow tube construction. A professional luthier can install the new endpin.

Carey Cheney, a native of Canada, has been performing and teaching for over 30 years. She holds the degree of Doctor of Music Arts, from the University of Utah, and studied cello and pedagogy with Phyllis Young for her master's and bachelor's at the University of Texas, Austin. Previously she was a student of Andre Navarra at the Höchschüle für Musik in Detmold Germany. She is the Alfred Music Author of the series called Solos For Young Cellists, an eight-volume compilation of cello music (books and audio CDs) of greatly varied musical styles. She is a Registered Teacher Trainer for the Suzuki Association of the Americas.

Pamela Devenport is faculty and the chair of cello at the School for Strings in New York City. Ms. Devenport is a Suzuki Association of the Americas Registered Cello Teacher Trainer, and is formerly collegiate faculty at Georgia State University and the Hartt School. Additionally, she holds diplomas from the Professional Studies Program at the Brennan School of Energy Healing in Miami, Florida, and in Advanced Studies in Brennan Integration Work. She has been a guest speaker for the National Cello Institute, the American String Teachers Association, SAA Conferences, the World Cello Congress, and guest faculty/lecturer at International Conferences in Australia, Italy, New Zealand, Great Britain, and Korea

Nancy Yamagata holds a bachelor of music in music education from the University of Southern California where she was recognized as the Outstanding Graduate of the School of Music in 1978. She began her cello studies with Eleonore Schoenfeld and studied Suzuki pedagogy with Rick Mooney, Barbara Wampner, Tanya Carey, and Gilda Barston. Ms. Yamagata is the cello coordinator of the Suzuki String Program at the Colburn School of Performing Arts in Los Angeles where she has taught for the past 38 years. In addition, she has directed the Chamber Music Workshop at the Los Angeles Suzuki Institute and is a valued member of the National Cello Institute faculty.

Do No Harm

By Joseph Kaminsky

I remember one late afternoon walking across the colorful iconic draw bridge from Seattle to Freemont at the Japan/Seattle Suzuki Institute after an exciting day working with the students. Freemont is a hip town and with lots of craft shops, quaint restaurants, bookstores, and of course in Seattle, coffee shops. As my friend and I were walking past a small café there was a man sitting there eating whom I instantly recognized as Simon James, the guest artist teacher for that year's Institute's Advanced violin program. My friend introduced me to him and we all chatted for a short while. While I really don't remember much of what we said, one point that Mr. James made that day has stayed with me. When asked what the most important thing a student or teacher can do when practicing or teaching he said, "Do no harm."

While that was a somewhat surprising statement, it was not unlike what many consider to be a primary goal of a physician, to do no harm to the patient. I have often, over my 40 years of teaching experience, wondered whether that should be the primary goal of any student when they begin to practice: not to come out of a practice session in worse shape than before they started the session. I have seen a good number of students who seem to practice inattentively, often unsupervised, who do seem to end up in worse shape at their next lesson and sometimes over a span of lessons. Additionally, I have seen a far greater number of students who just don't seem to improve like one would expect over a significant span of time in spite of a fair amount of regular practice. While some of them could be fibbing on their practice time, I suspect that most of them are just not listening critically to their playing when they practice, so much so that they are actually allowing their playing to stagnate, or even decline.

Each weekly lesson is a controlled practice environment which can either validate one's home practice or show the need for improvement in the daily practice routine.

After receiving my master's degree in performance with a Suzuki emphasis, I started my first full time job the next fall, teaching in Chicago. When you first start teaching you are at a real disadvantage. For one, nobody knows you or knows what you can do. You don't have any successful previous examples of students you have taught to give parents the confidence to believe what you have to say is important. You are generally very young and the young are often not taken seriously. If you are not a parent, students' parents can always dismiss what you are asking for as "unreasonable," since you have no idea how hard it is to be a parent. In short, novice teachers start out with four strikes against them. Because of this, you are willing to put up with meager cooperation from the parents as you need time to build your program to the standard you desire, and you also need to do everything in your powers just to keep your students.

I remember back in Chicago I had a couple of students, Edwin and Eric, who didn't put in very much practice time at home. I asked them if they had "practiced hard" and their mom interjected, "You mean hardly practiced." Week after week their only practice seemed to be in the actual lesson. To be honest, it was very slow progress, but I began to notice something interesting about those boys: when they played on the solo recital each year, they had beautiful, relaxed postures and actually sounded quite nice. They might have only reached the beginning of Book Two after four or five years of lessons, but I certainly had other students who regularly practiced 45 minutes and more each day who did not have the setup that these boys had. That started me thinking that practice time is overvalued while practice quality is undervalued.

We all are familiar with the fable of the tortoise and the hare: the slow and steady tortoise wins the race over the much faster hare. I use that analogy in my studio with students who seem to take detours rather than heading towards the finish line when they practice. I try to get them to realize if you start practicing with the wrong notes or rhythms or the incorrect posture, you are heading in the opposite direction from the finish line and will need to put in considerable effort just to get back to where you started. Many students and especially parents have the mistaken impression that the number of pieces you learn in a year is the definition of progress. In reality, the pieces are only like vehicles used to drive you towards your ultimate destination. Success is measured in how close you are to Disney World, not how many cars you need to get there. Not to belittle the importance of traversing the sequential order of the Suzuki literature and using the number of pieces learned as one measure of success, but the other measurements of Dr. Suzuki's hierarchy of progress are much more important as measurements of success, though they are less tangible yardsticks: 1. Improving posture; 2. Improving tone; 3. Improving intonation; 4. Improving dynamics; and, 5. Improving musical expression and sensitivity.

Perfection in practice is nonexistent, and younger students are obviously far less efficient in their practice sessions than more experienced students. As students learn from their mistakes, they can begin to realize what they need to do at home to be better prepared for the next lesson. Each weekly lesson is a controlled practice environment which can either validate one's home practice or show the need for improvement in the daily practice routine.

If the primary focus during the home practice sessions is to "do no harm," then the primary concentration should be on playing the pieces correctly, rather than just getting through as many pieces as possible or fulfilling the required time commitment.

In medicine, in spite of a physician's best efforts there sometimes comes a time when something they do to try to heal a patient will actually backfire and harm the patient. Many safeguards have to be set up in medicine to minimize these unfortunate circumstances. Similarly, we can set up safeguards in music education to minimize the number of times our practice sessions backfire against progress. Below is a list of suggested safeguards which won't necessarily prevent faulty practice, but if followed should limit the damage when it occurs and vastly reduce the occurrences of negative practice.

Practice time is overvalued while practice quality is undervalued.

1. Consider each lesson a model of how to practice at home. What the teacher does in a lesson should be the ideal of how to practice at home. Too often home practice sessions deviate greatly from the "practice session" of the lesson.
2. Listen daily to your recording and watch a video of your teacher playing your piece so you can groom your consciousness and better catch your mistakes before you make them at the lesson. The more you listen to the model, the better equipped you will be to catch when your playing doesn't measure up to the model. As the SAA teacher trainer Moshe Neumann says, "Work less, make more money." Those who do regular listening will reap the benefits of this philosophy.
3. "Never play it faster than you can play it accurately and perfectly in tune." Those salient words of Almita Vamos are so often not heeded, as students like to be speed demons. I often ask a student what happens if their parents drive home a little slower than the maximum they can safely drive; obviously nothing happens. Then I ask them what happens if their parents drive home a little faster than they can safely drive. The same philosophy goes for practice speed at home.
4. Be your own recording. As the recording is the perfect model for you to aspire to, it is perfectly fine to create your own model, too. This way you can create a model that is perfectly tailored and attainable in the near term, as playing at the recording quality and tempo is very much a long-term goal. Creating your own model is simple. It can be done by singing the phrase first, then playing it immediately afterward in a similar fashion. It also can be done by playing each phrase one time slowly, accurately, and perfectly in tune, then playing it up to tempo immediately afterwards. It is amazing how helpful creating your own model can be to your practice.
5. Divide and conquer. When working on a piece, the probability of success is enhanced when you work on small sections rather than play the entire piece at once. You need to have a manageable amount of material to work with to have the capacity to digest it, much like eating an entire cow. Eating a cow over the course of a year is feasible by digesting small parts of it each day; eating the cow in one day, not so feasible.
6. Have your teacher make a slow video of your piece and do daily "active listening" of it. Active listening in my studio involves the student turning the bow upside down and bowing the piece in their left elbow joint while watching the video. If they are far enough along on their piece, then they can silently finger the piece too. This way the student is going through all the motions of playing the piece, but the sound that comes out is superior to what the student can currently produce, thus elevating the standard the student can realize. If the piece is slow enough for the student to play along with the teacher's video, that is helpful to do sometimes too.
7. Your metronome is your second best friend. To emphasize this point, I ask students who their best friend is. After I listen to their answer, I tell them that their second best friend must be their metronome. Passages that are in a steady tempo really benefit from practice with a metronome, but not faster than you can play them accurately and in tune. Passages with more variable expressive tempos can be practiced while COL (counting out loud). This way you can keep the integrity of the rhythm while still being musically expressive.
8. The vast majority of one's practice time should be spent practicing, not performing. Too often the reverse is true: students just play straight through pieces at tempo without stopping for problem spots or aberrant postures. The main times you should play straight through your piece without stopping should be at the beginning of your practice for diagnostic reasons, at the end of your practice for summative reasons, or when you are preparing for a performance or audition.
9. While recording yourself, play a small, difficult passage of your piece that may need improvement. Play back the recording and listen to it critically in isolation without having to be concentrating on the other factors of playing—straight bow, correct posture, etc. Figure out what needs improvement and practice it. Then record yourself

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again, and play it back, listening critically again. Do this as often as needed. I once observed my daughter-in-law (an assistant concertmaster with the St. Louis Symphony) practicing for about 40 minutes without her noticing me. She did this type of practice repeatedly with just one passage of Rimsky-Korsakov for the entire 40 minutes. I was impressed how deeply she went into the passage and her tenacity for detail and repetition.

10. Train the brain first with slow practice and listening; then train the muscles to execute with unit practice at tempo. The brain is the supervisor of the muscle team and needs to know exactly what to do. Once it does, the brain supervises the muscles' execution of the passage until it becomes automatic habit and the muscles don't need constant supervision from the brain every time. Slow practice will deeply train the brain and the awareness. Practicing in small segments at tempo trains the muscles to perform. This at-tempo unit practice also trains the brain to catch things even during fast passages, a very valuable skill.
11. Never forget the power of vision. "Strong eyes" should not be overlooked when practicing. Students get in the bad habit of staring at the music just because it is on the stand. At other times they stare at the teacher, apparently waiting for comments. This precludes them from focusing on their bows to keep them straight and to get to the frog. It also hampers watching the left hand during shifts. My students know to mostly watch their bows when playing, but shift their vision to the left hand when shifting. Also, while in playing fifths and sixths or other intervals, strong eyes focused on the whole and half steps on the fingerboard greatly improve accuracy, as the fingerboard is much like a chess board. In shifting, the most important thing to know is what position you are shifting to and what constitutes a good hand position for the destination position.
12. Remember that vibrato is an ornament. It is good to practice vibrated passages without vibrato to improve both tone and intonation. It is important when doing slow practice not to use vibrato on passages that will not use vibrato when played eventually at tempo, such as with 16th notes. Also because of this, scales and arpeggios should to a large extent be practiced without vibrato to facilitate fast passages.
13. Every day's practice should include some tonalization. You may use Dr. Suzuki's Tonalization exercises in the Suzuki books, Chorus from Judas Maccabaeus, or even the current piece or review pieces played with full bows and no rhythm so that attention to ringing resonant tone can be your focus. Just as your instrument needs tuning every day, so does your ear.
14. Don't be a "one and done" practicer. If you play something incorrectly, you need not only to fix the mistake, but play it at least twice correctly to just undo the damage. I have my students play something five times correctly for every time they miss that spot. I call it the Rule of Five Plus. If they play it incorrectly on any repetition, they need to subtract one repetition. Students who try to repeat haphazardly often end up in the negative numbers and occasionally take five minutes just to get back to zero. Having a penalty for playing the passage incorrectly is a very important tool to get students to listen critically and pay attention to their own playing.
15. Set realistic short-term goals for each practice week and even each practice session. Have an idea of a section of a piece that can be played in tune at a faster tempo by the end of the practice week. Make a goal of having all the wrong bowings in a movement corrected by the end of the practice. Less is more: being stuck from having too much to do can only be dealt with by limiting the scope of what needs to be accomplished.
16. Remember that if you have to make a choice between playing correct notes/rhythms or having good relaxed posture, choose good posture. If you really mess up the notes to a piece, when you eventually start the next piece you get a fresh set of new notes. If you practice with bad posture, you carry those bad habits directly to the next piece and all subsequent pieces. Relaxed posture should be the number one emphasis. On the positive side, good posture habits will follow you to the next piece and eventually become automatic. Cultivate good, relaxed posture habits in your review pieces, as it is those "easy" pieces where your mind is free enough to focus on building good fundamentals. The most overlooked problem students have when practicing is not remembering this advice: "Always start with quality ingredients." If you start with proper posture every time you begin to play, you will experience success.

It may sound trite, but I remember my father often quoting to me, "A job worth doing is worth doing well." As we all practice, we need to make sure every minute counts. Inattentive practice that diverts us away from our end goal only serves to perpetuate the drudgery of practice. Setting a goal for the practice session and knowing that you accomplished it is very rewarding. It just feels good to know that you are heading in the right direction.

Joseph Kaminsky has been teaching violin for over forty years and has been a registered Suzuki Teacher Trainer since 1984. He is a frequent workshop and institute clinician and has taught at more than 350 such events, as well as at national conferences and workshops in Japan, Puerto Rico, Canada and Singapore. Mr. Kaminsky received his training studying with John Kendall, Roland/Amita Vamos, and Shinichi Suzuki. Formerly adjunct professor of violin at Webster University and the University of Missouri-St. Louis, he currently has taught twenty years for the Kirkwood School District. Mr.. Kaminsky is also Principal 2nd violinist with the Metropolitan Orchestra of St. Louis and a member of the Cardinal String Quartet. Joseph Kaminsky was named MoASTA "Artist String Teacher of the Year" in 2014 and "Private Teacher of the Year" in 1999. He also is a regular contributor to the *American Suzuki Journal*.

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Reflections on Life-Long Learning and SECE

By David Madsen

It was during an SAA Board of Directors meeting in Connecticut in 2006 when I first got to observe Suzuki Early Childhood Education in action. The board observed a class of 12 children, ages three months to three years, led by Lynn McCall and Laura Speno. It amazed me to see these children so focused on the singing and choreography to the point that they didn't know or care we were there, and the three year olds were leading some of the activities. I didn't see a single child lose concentration. At the time I thought, if I were younger I would definitely take this training and get a program started.

It was ten years later when I decided to take training with Lynn and Laura this past spring semester. There were five of us in the course with Lynn. We got to watch and eventually lead a class that took place over a ten-week period. Seeing the evolution of this class only strengthened my appreciation of SECE. One of our assignments was to reread *Ability Development from Age Zero* and write a paper on Dr. Suzuki's philosophy and SECE. That assignment was the inspiration for this article.

> ***Talent is not inborn, everyone has a sprout of talent.[1]***

We know from our training that ability development is based on a strong Suzuki triangle. While all the sides of the triangle are of equal importance, it is primarily the parent and the teacher that create the environment that will allow the student to develop into an equal partner in the process.

When the environment is rich with exposure to beautiful music, includes supportive parents and teacher, and brings children together younger and older in the same activities, a child's ability will develop from what Dr. Suzuki describes as a child's incredible "life force." When a child is engaged in the moment, time has no meaning, and ability development happens effortlessly. It is the polar opposite of my music learning experience, where I had a teacher who would threaten me if I wasn't successful, did not provide me with examples of excellence, and provided no peer group and parents who would put on a timer and leave me to practice on my own, listening to the timer and waiting for the ding.

Rereading *Ability Development from Age Zero* and participating in this SECE training made me realize that I have been starting my students at an older age than the ideal time. Dr. Suzuki's references in the book comparing children to seedlings have a whole new relevance for me as a result of this training:

> "Setting aside a child until elementary school age and then saying that now education begins is like taking a withered or withering sprout and suddenly giving it large amounts of fertilizer, putting it in sunlight and flooding it with water. It is too late for the withered sprout."[2]

About developing ability, he wrote:

> "If a child speaks his language fluently, he has developmental possibilities. Other abilities should therefore develop according to the way he is raised."[3]

> ***"Knowing that children have such a wonderful life force, it is inexcusable not to develop it." [4]***

Musical and character training should start at the same time as the mother tongue process. It all adds up to the fact that I have been beginning teaching my students years too late!

I have always thought of my Pre-Twinkle classes, bot h the private and group lessons, as the vehicle for teaching the three to five year olds the protocol of having a lesson. In those classes, I build focus and concentration, help the children develop musical skills, and make it enjoyable so the children look forward to coming to class each week.

Over time, the children develop the ability to participate fully in my classes. This is also a training period for the parents to appreciate their own child's abilities and how to best help them develop their musical skills and, more importantly, their character.

One of the big challenges is building the child's sense of pulse. Suzuki students are great at hearing rhythms because they listen to recordings. Providing the foundation of a beat to support those rhythms has always been one of the main long-term goals of my Pre-Twinkle and Book One classes. Another challenge is having the children settle down, take a bow, and stay present in the class throughout.

Observing the children in the SECE class has made me realize that starting an SECE class will give the Pre-Twinkle class a whole new set of skills to work from. The sense of pulse will be ingrained, developed by the drum and dancing activities. Focus will also be much more developed in the three-year-olds who start an instrument. The SECE class starts calmly with Mozart playing and a gentle ball rolling activity. Seeing the effect this has on the children has already helped me to change the environment of my Pre-Twinkle and Book One classes. I used to let them run around and play before class, and then I would wonder why my students had a hard time getting focused. Now I have classical guitar music playing when they enter and ask them to be quiet enough so everyone can hear it. They have been sitting and talking much more quietly and

> ***"Children learn abilities best when they are having fun."[5]***

Photo by L. Felts

is a delight to see, and it can only serve to deepen the parent/child relationship.

The seamless transitions from one activity to the next build the child's concentration and focus. When a child is having fun with an activity, he is learning without knowing it and is totally immersed.

I am very excited about starting the SECE classes at Hartt. There is a part of me that wishes we were in a position to make it a requirement for beginning Suzuki instruction at Hartt, as having a class of SECE-trained students and non-trained students will be a challenge. We shouldn't penalize any family who wants to use Dr. Suzuki's philosophy, however, and I believe the students who are SECE-trained will be great role models in our classes.

As we gain new experience in our field, we gain new perspectives on what we know and what we study. Taking the SECE training has given me a whole new level of understanding of *Ability Development from Age Zero*. Now, more than ever, I am amazed that Dr. Suzuki had the wisdom and insight to point out to the world what was always right in front of us.

that provides a much smoother transition to class.

The respect that is taught in the SECE class is also a powerful element for the students. The patience for the younger students in the ball rolling activity, the folding of the scarves, and the return of the books to the basket are just a few of the teaching points for respect in this class. This is a small but important start towards helping children have "exceptional talent and exceptional heart,"[6] as illustrated by Dr. Suzuki's story about the open window and his student Yamamoto.

The joy of accomplishment shared by the class and especially by the parent and child over whatever success, large or small, is great training for the parents in celebrating each age-appropriate improvement, and provides the model of "repetitions = success" for the child. The joy of the celebratory hugs

1. Shinichi Suzuki, Ability Development from Age Zero, trans. Mary Louise Nagata (Athens, OH: Ability Development Associates, 1981), 3.
2. Ibid., 12.
3. Ibid., 5.
4. Ibid., 12.
5. Ibid., 20.
6. Ibid., 59.

David Madsen founded what is now the Hartt Suzuki Guitar Program in '90. He is the Chair of the Guitar and Harp Dept. of the Community Division at the Hartt School of Music. He became a registered Teacher Trainer with the Suzuki Association of the Americas in 2000, and has conducted training courses throughout North America and in Peru and Argentina. Mr. Madsen is a member of the SAA Guitar Committee and also is presently a member of the Teacher Development Advisory Committee.

Celebrating 30 years of Suzuki Voice

A report on the first International *Songs for Sharing* Suzuki Voice Conference held in the United States, July 4–9, 2016

By Amelia Seyssel

The mood was festive and expectantly upbeat as we began our international conference together on that most historic of United States holidays, July 4. Our location was also historical—the first immigrants to the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area arrived more than 300 years ago. A happy circumstance paired our Suzuki Voice 30th Anniversary with our venue host's 300th Anniversary of continuous worship as a religious congregation: The Reformed Dutch Church of Poughkeepsie, NY—1716-2016. It was a special week of sharing our music and US history with our foreign guests. It was also the first time this international event had been held in the United States.

Our teacher and student participants (ages three years and up) attended from the countries of Finland, Japan, Mexico and the United States, including the States of Alaska, Arizona, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New York. Our foreign guests from Japan and Finland began their experience in the US by viewing a local July 4 parade in historic Hyde Park, home of the presidential library of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the former residence/museum of Eleanor Roosevelt.

Our official opening ceremonies followed that same afternoon at our venue, a building on the United States National Register of Historic Places, the space generously donated by our host. Dr. Päivi Kukkamäki (ESA, SAA), founder of Suzuki Voice, presented a Powerpoint lecture: "Keep On Teaching Singing the Happy Suzuki Way: Dr. Shinichi and Mrs. Waltraud Suzuki's last wish." Participants provided periodic live demonstrations throughout the presentation, singing together pieces from our Suzuki Voice repertoire in multiple languages and from multiple countries

Our youngest Suzuki Voice students: from Connecticut, Massachusetts and New York.

and cultures. Our Volume One students happily sang Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star while more advanced students sang above them a descant of Alle Vögel from Volume Two. We sang Pat-a-cake from Volume Two in both English and Finnish, and celebrated the blooming season with Tempus adest floridum from Volume Three. Later on in the program we added Japanese to our international celebration: Dr. Suzuki's own Onegai.

Throughout the following week both students and teachers worked on improving their pertinent skills within the caring environment of our Suzuki Voice community. Teachers learned along with the students, providing a concrete example to all students of Dr. Suzuki's directive to continually strive towards excellence by making step-by-step improvements to our skills as well as to our appreciation of everyday beauty in all that surrounds us. All were supportive of each other's unique and special learning curves. Our Suzuki method enjoins us to teach and learn by listening, imitation, and repetition. Every Songs for Sharing event creates that optimal learning environment in full measure. One of the end results of such a joyful encounter is an intense week-long "lesson" in how to live more fully our Suzuki philosophy. The other end result is our wonderful concerts, brought to joyful and resounding completion by the intermingling of teachers and students and a learning environment steeped in the principles of the Suzuki method.

Just as for all other instruments included in the Suzuki method, our Suzuki Voicep grounds itself in a classical approach to repertoire and technique. This constitutes our core repertoire—the repertoire that is specifically designed to grow and build the technical expertise in our instrument up to the highest level possible. As with other Suzuki instruments, Suzuki Voice teachers also occasionally and happily add additional styles to our core body of repertoire in order both to expand the individual student's musical horizons and to assist in motivating the student through particularly difficult learning plateaus. The Suzuki Voice program focuses on a step-by-step development aimed toward the ability to sing advanced solo and ensemble repertoire in the classical tradition, the highest level of difficulty being opera. Hence, our concerts during our Songs for Sharing events showcase both solo and ensemble music from our core repertoire as well as whatever extra pieces our students' teachers have selected to help students along their unique developmental way.

At our 2016 Songs for Sharing, this happy confluence of core repertoire and enrichment learning translated into an evening Solos Concert on Friday, July 8, and an afternoon Gala Concert on Saturday, July 9, both accompanied by our superb pianist Maria Rivera White. Our Solos Concert included as many participating students as came to the conference with a prepared solo. The youngest soloist was three years old and sang Cuckoo from Suzuki Voice Volume One. Our oldest soloist was 19 and sang La Capinera by Julius Benedict, accompanied by flute performed by Kristen Vinson. Between those youngest and oldest ages we enjoyed a variety of solos by different ages, at different levels, and including a variety of styles: folk song, musical theater, and art songs by Amy Beach and Samuel Barber.

The week culminated in an outstandingly and movingly performed Gala Concert. Our Gala Concert focused on group singing and a heavy dose of Suzuki Voice core repertoire selections. Our ensembles varied from all-inclusive to small groups, depending on the repertoire, and included singing in English, Spanish, Finnish, Japanese, German, Latin, and Italian.

As with our opening ceremonies, we began our Gala concert with Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star, this time in as many different languages as countries attending. Then we joyfully stepped through some core repertoire selections from all levels of difficulty, beginning to more advanced, and also from our special Songs for Sharing core repertoire list. We joined our voices to sing An die Freude by Beethoven, Wir gehn nun by JS Bach, Onegai, by S. Suzuki, and Avvezzo a vivere, by N. Vaccaj. Some later concert highlights included some higher level songs by Sibelius and Ruotsala from Finland, a song called *Morning Tide* by S. Leek

Continued on p. 40

After the final GALA Concert: teachers, students, pianist and flautist.

Suzuki Voice, continued from p. 39

from Australia, Franck's beautiful *Panis Angelicus* in Latin and A. Copland's *Simple Gifts*. Our boys had their own special moment singing *Diggi, daggi* from Mozart's opera *Bastien und Bastienne*. As a special tribute to our host country, we ended our concert with a piece chosen especially for this 2016 US Songs for Sharing debut titled *Songs of the Earth*: two Native American circle songs arranged by Jill Gallina, accompanied by Maria Rivera White on piano, Kristen Vinson on flute, and Kari Weldon on drum.

Earlier in the week, directly following our opening ceremonies program, American participants gave their USA Country Presentation, an extravaganza of students and teachers from many parts of the country sharing some iconic American songs with our international audience. Sporting red, white and blue decor, we marched to the tune of *Yankee Doodle*, an American marching song from the Revolutionary War and Connecticut's state song. Then we celebrated American Musical Theater by singing and staging two songs by George M. Cohen: *I'm a Yankee Doodle Dandy* and *You're a Grand Old Flag.* Two Connecticut students dressed as Uncle Sam highlighted our celebratory revue. Then we happily shared a traditional outdoor hot dog cook-out with our foreign guests, complete with corn on the cob and s'mores!

On the second day of our conference, our foreign guests also offered their own Country Presentations, which encourage exuberant audience participation. Teacher Masayo Okano (TERI, ESA), dressed in traditional kimono, represented Japan and was assisted by a local Suzuki Piano family of Japanese origins in demonstrating a traditional Japanese hand and singing game. They were additionally joined by two advanced level American Suzuki Voice to assist in singing the beloved Japanese song *Sakura*. Teacher Aldo Guerrero Moreno (SAA, ESA), representing Mexico, was also assisted by a local family of Mexican origins whose daughter, a Suzuki Voice student, danced *La Negra,* a traditional Mexican dance, in full, vibrantly colorful costume. Mr. Guerrero Moreno was joined by Suzuki Voice students from Massachusetts and New York to assist in singing the song *Cielito Lindo.* Our Finnish contingent, in traditional Finnish costume and led by Dr. Päivi Kukkamäki (ESA, SAA) and occasionally joined by other Suzuki Voice singers from the US, presented a slide-show presentation, traditional dance and songs, including *Souda, souda sinisorsa* by Sibelius. All three countries also shared with us a sampling of their country's food, a delicious addition to our evening entertainment!

After such a busy and active week of singing, music, and joyful community, our final Gala Concert left us feeling emotionally and musically replete. Our visceral response found verbal form in the universally expressed exclamation, "See you in Finland in 2018!"—our next Songs for Sharing event. Friendships were made across distances and cultures, among both students and teachers. Students badgered their parents to "commit" to Finland in 2018—when else would they see their newly-made friends again? Teachers returned to their studios with larger hearts and a renewed commitment to the Suzuki way.

There was one piece in our Gala concert that amply represents the spirit of all our Songs for Sharing events, an ensemble piece by Jerry Estes which even our youngest was able to perform: "Peace neverending, Joy overflowing, Love everlasting and true—this is our Gift for you!" Suzuki Voice teachers everywhere joyfully pass this wish to *all* in our Suzuki family: across all distances, across all instruments, across all borders!

Suzuki Voice teacher **Amelia Seyssel** is an ESA-accredited and SAA-registered Suzuki Voice teacher and holds a master of fine arts in vocal performance and literature from Mills College, CA. She is the first Suzuki Voice teacher from the United States to have earned an ESA Diploma (highest level possible) for Suzuki Voice instruction (equivalent to SAA Units One through Ten plus extensive Practicum and Certificate Examinations at each of five levels). She trained most extensively at the Talent Education Institute of Singing in Vantaa, Finland, with Suzuki Voice Founder Dr. Päivi Kukkamäki. In the course of her Suzuki Voice teacher training studies, Ms. Seyssel has acquired training and teaching experience in Finland, Australia, Japan, Mexico, and the US; and been faculty at two international Suzuki Voice conferences focused on student and teacher development. More information about her Music Studio is available at: http://www.ameliaseyssel.com/musicstudio.html Photos available at: https://www.facebook.com/ameliaseyssel

Chamber Music, continued from p. 21

and expressing musical ideas so we could be more sophisticated and thoughtful players."

—Natalie Wong

"Christopher had a wonderful time being coached by Erin Keefe. He knew she was a former student of the Hartt School Community Division and is now playing with one of the country's best orchestras, so he was very excited to meet (and hear) her in Minnesota. He was very proud to be able to travel to the conference with his quartet, and can't wait for the next one!" —Barbara Hill

The second group to perform was the Lucca Quintet from the Preucil School in Iowa, coached by Linda Judiesch. Performers were Ananth and Divya Shyamal, violins; Marylee Brown, viola; Meleah Chang, cello; and Ethan Buck, piano. The ensemble performed the Boccherini Quintet No. 4 in d minor, G. 416, Final-Allegro assai.

The groups performed on stage before a large, appreciative audience. Thanks to our Chamber Music Coordinator, Sarah Smale, and Assistant, Sherry Cadow for their work. We hope to grow the chamber music area of the conference; plan for your group to apply in October, 2017—less than a year from now!

Conference students with Erin Keefe at the reception following her performance in Orchestra Hall

Scenes from the 2016 SAA Conference

Photos by L. Abramson & SAA Staff

Proud to be a Member of Southeast Texas Suzuki Association in Houston, Texas

By Darbi Green

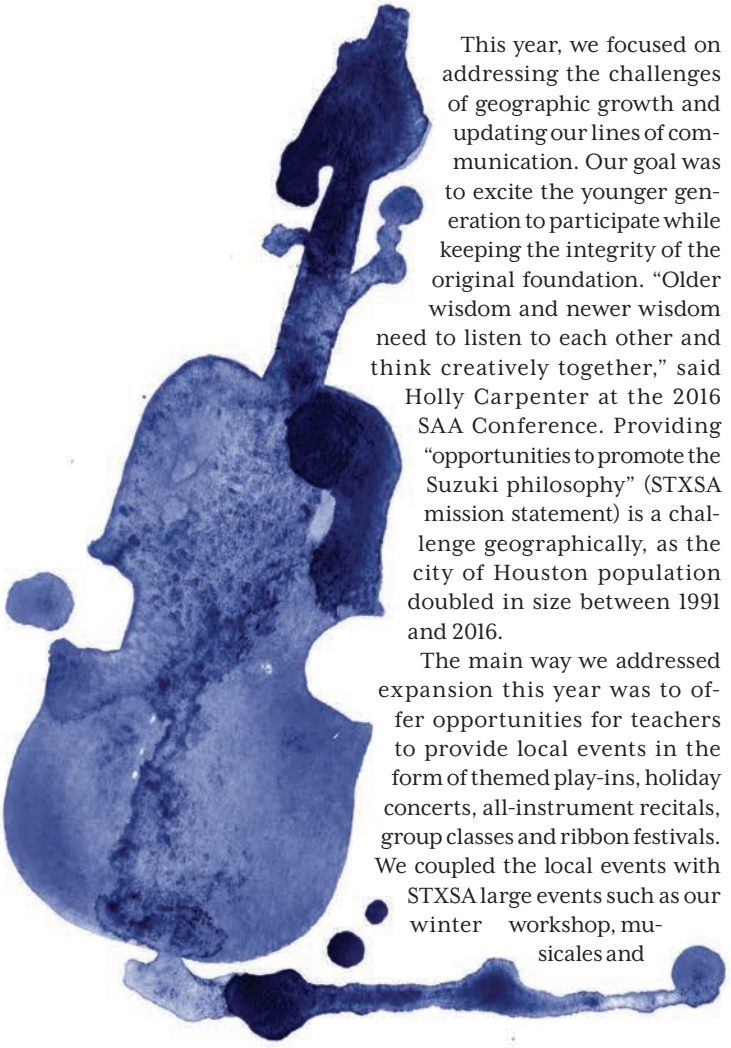
As president of Southeast Texas Suzuki Association, I've had the honor and privilege of getting to know the many talented Suzuki teachers here in Houston. I was asked to write about Southeast Texas Suzuki Association and how we became to be an SAA Chapter Affiliate. Because I have been a resident of Houston for only two-and-a-half years, I have asked members of our organization to help recap our organizational history. I will be quoting from our general membership and sharing examples of changes over the years to show how we got to where we are today.

In 1991 the Suzuki violin teachers in Houston had a vision to provide Suzuki education to children and families and to provide support to local Suzuki teachers. Pam Reit and violin teacher trainer Judy Offman founded "Houston Suzuki Violin Teachers." In 1993 the name changed to "Houston Area Suzuki String Association" (HASSA) to include viola, cello, guitar and harp. With the help of Terri Matchett and Darbi Green, the organization's name changed in 2015 to Southeast Texas Suzuki Association (STXSA, or "Stick-sa") to include piano with the existing string association membership and started the process of applying for SAA Chapter Affiliate status.

Teri Einfeldt's quote of Max DePree in her September 2009 *American Suzuki Journal* Chair's Column sums up our organization's growth and development through the years: "We cannot become what we need to be by remaining what we are." In 2016, Southeast Texas Suzuki Association officially became a chapter affiliate of the SAA and was presented with an official certificate at the 2016 SAA Conference. We are proud of this accomplishment because this gives us the ability to have more widespread communication and promote Suzuki through educational events for students, parents, and teachers.

Becoming a Chapter Affiliate benefits and offers more support to local teachers and students. "Before STXSA became an SAA Chapter Affiliate and accepted all instruments, my students who learn both violin and piano needed to attend events held individually from local Suzuki string or piano organizations with extra effort, time and travel. Now they get to attend one event for both of their instruments," said Shaochin Chien, STXSA Suzuki piano and violin teacher. As teachers, we need emotional support as well as professional support. Through STXSA, teachers have the opportunity to come to several general meetings where Suzuki topics are discussed and everyone is updated on yearly events. Book club was introduced several years ago and is a fun reason to get together to chat about life and the book of the month while eating snacks with friends.

2016 STXSA Workshop Concert



This year, we focused on addressing the challenges of geographic growth and updating our lines of communication. Our goal was to excite the younger generation to participate while keeping the integrity of the original foundation. "Older wisdom and newer wisdom need to listen to each other and think creatively together," said Holly Carpenter at the 2016 SAA Conference. Providing "opportunities to promote the Suzuki philosophy" (STXSA mission statement) is a challenge geographically, as the city of Houston population doubled in size between 1991 and 2016.

The main way we addressed expansion this year was to offer opportunities for teachers to provide local events in the form of themed play-ins, holiday concerts, all-instrument recitals, group classes and ribbon festivals. We coupled the local events with STXSA large events such as our winter workshop, musicales and graduation. In past years, we have had the privilege of John Kendall, Dorothy Jones, Susan Kempter, Barbara Barber, Doris Preucil and James Hutchins, to name a few, coming to Houston to teach at our winter or spring workshops, masterclasses, teacher enrichment classes and/or parent education classes.

This year we had some significant changes—changing the organizational name, offering local events, and becoming an SAA Chapter Affiliate. But change was happening through the preceding years in small but significant ways. Andrea Cannon, guitar teacher trainer, recounts, "I remember the fall workshop planning meeting where then president Rosemary Jodeit declared, 'We are going to have guitar at this fall workshop!' There were only two of us guitar teacher-members at the time. I realized right away that this meant our president was committing some of the funds from the violin attendance to give our guitar students an equal opportunity. I felt very grateful as this was not something the two guitar members could afford on our own."

Graduation is an honor and highlight for both teachers and students each year. From personal experience, helping my students prepare their Book One performances was an amazing process. I've seen each student go through a personal growing process as he or she perfects technique and strives to produce a beautiful tone consistently. This process produces growing confidence and a feeling of pride. Through STXSA, we also try to offer a way for all students to attend an institute if they so desire. Student families who may need financial assistance have the opportunity to apply for a student scholarship to help their child attend a summer institute.

Similar to Dr. Suzuki embracing technology by listening to taped recordings of students, we embraced technology by updating our website to offer online registration of events and membership and by using social media through Twitter, Facebook, and smartphone apps to keep members informed about community events and opportunities. Last year, we used social media as a theme for our workshop "Musical Tweets." Social media was used to promote the excitement of practicing by having students post a short, mastered four-to-eight-measure video of anything they are working on in the weeks and months prior to the workshop date. The criteria for submitting or posting a video was that they were to have good posture, intonation, correct bowing or hand position, and a smile. This was positive in many ways. It attracted more traffic to our STXSA Facebook group, students were motivated to practice because they wanted to look their best online and local businesses were willing to donate because they would be advertised online.

Our organization embraces Dr. Suzuki's vision to "make Suzuki education available to more children and families, train more teachers in the Suzuki method, bring children together and play together," as Winifred Crock said at the 2016 SAA Conference. Embracing change throughout the years reflects how much we love the Suzuki method. We grew from a Suzuki violin group to an SAA Chapter Affiliate offering more events to all stringed instruments, harp, guitar, and piano. We are fortunate to have two teacher trainers, Judy Offman, violin teacher trainer, and Andrea Cannon, Guitar teacher trainer, as well as a leading Suzuki Early Childhood Education instructor Danette Schuh, all of whom share their knowledge to teachers.

Thank you to all those faithful teachers who were pioneers in making changes through the years in order to make the Suzuki method more available in the wonderful city of Houston.

History by Andrea Cannon, Claire Eary, Darbi Green, Kathy Larsen and Julie Richards

Darbi Green is a graduate of the University of Puget Sound. She currently teaches weekly private and group classes. She is certified with the Suzuki method up through book 7 and Music Mind Games a music theory method. Director and founder of the Wasatch Youth Ensemble. Young violinists ages 6-18 perform current and popular music on the violin along with professional hip hop choreography. For more information about this group, please visit our website www.wasatchyouthensemble.org or friend us on Facebook.

Artistry, Inspiration, and Suzuki Parenting: An Interview with Rachel Barton Pine

Interviewed by Christine Goodner

Acclaimed concert violinist Rachel Barton Pine had her professional debut at the age of seven with the Chicago String Ensemble. She has recorded more than 30 albums (of both classical and historic music) and is the winner of many national and international violin competitions including a gold medal at the 1992 JS Bach International Competition in Leipzig, Germany. She actively performs all over the United States and the world, bringing her great ability to connect and communicate with audiences through music.

I first learned about Rachel Barton Pine through her podcast *Violin Adventures* (which can be found on iTunes) and have admired her ever since: not only for her accomplishments as a violinist but for the deep historical knowledge she brings to the music she plays, her passion for bringing classical music to new audiences, and her commitment to music education.

When Rachel Barton Pine was in Portland, Oregon, earlier this year, she generously agreed to sit down with me to talk about artistry, staying inspired, her early years as a musician (she is a former Suzuki student) and her new adventure as a Suzuki mom. She was equally passionate about each of these topics and has some wonderful insights to share. I hope this interview is one you will come back to read again and again, just as I have since talking with her.

Since our interview began right after a masterclass, I was curious if there was one thing Pine likes to focus on with the students. She says she is never sure what she will work on until she hears each student but tries to keep the audience in mind as well as the student she is working with. She requires that they all stay and listen to each other so that she can address something different with each one but refer back to another student to make similar points. "I also try to say things in a way that's specific to the person playing for me, but universal enough that everyone listening can understand something about the concept behind it. It's not that I'm giving the person on stage a lesson and everyone is observing behind a glass wall. I'm teaching to the room as much as I'm teaching to the individual, and so it's a really different animal than giving a lesson. This is probably going back to the Suzuki philosophy, but I always make sure that I start by saying something nice and then launch right in!"

Mastery

Christine Goodner: *Sometimes as teachers we have students who think, "Well, I've learned the notes and the bowing and the rhythm and so now it's time to move on." I would love to hear your thoughts about why it is good to keep coming back to a piece and refining it once you've learned it.*

Rachel Barton Pine: If we were athletes and we executed our routine and learned it accurately—then it would be time to move on to the next thing. If we were doing math and figured out that 7+5=12, then you can't get more perfect than that. In music, the reason we love it so much is that it's an art. Getting everything right is the point at which we actually start working. That's the beginning, not the end.

Our journey never does end… I'm still playing pieces that I learned when I was in the single digits [of age] and finding new things in them: refining my understanding and further clarifying what it is that I want to bring to every moment of emotion.

And then there is experimentation—that's when it really gets fun! We get to try out different characters, explore our personality in the music and just bring it to life. I think it's really great when students do things that they suspect won't work but they just try it out anyway—not just doing the interpretation that the teacher gives them. It's great to have a teacher who is flexible and will say "Let's try this—maybe take a little time over here, or maybe take time over here—which do you like better?"

I think that it's a good idea to find a way to let the performer, even a very young one, have some degree of agency in their repertoire. That way, they are not only "obeying" and doing their best to get it "right," but they are making it specific to themselves. Personalizing their music gets them so excited!

Christine: *How do you approach playing pieces that you have performed many times before?*

Rachel: I have made a promise to myself and to my audiences that if I'm not feeling inspired about the repertoire or I ever start to feel like something is stale, then it doesn't matter how prestigious the orchestra or conductor is or how much money I am being offered to play the gig, I will have the integrity to turn it down. Thankfully, that has not yet happened!

Let's take the Mendelssohn Concerto. I'm not sure statistically if I have played it the most total number of times (maybe that would be the Tchaikovsky or maybe the Brahms), but certainly I've been playing it for more years than almost any other concerto, and yet somehow there is always a freshness to that piece. I go back to it each time and it's just such a joy, it's like eating your favorite meal. You couldn't eat it every day, but every time you eat it you go, "Oh, that's so delicious!" That's what defines a great piece, I think, the fact that you can't ever get sick of it.

Practice

Rachel: I really believe in planning out your practice sessions and also building in artificial yet meaningful rewards.

Ultimately music becomes its own reward, but we can learn to reward ourselves with music (it doesn't always have to be something unrelated like a piece of chocolate or a shiny penny). Just tell yourself "Okay, if I really do 10 more minutes of working on this annoying passage of thirds, I'm going to let myself play that piece I loved last month and really nailed at my recital, and I'm going to

really rip into it and let loose and have fun," or "I'm going to jam along to my favorite song on the radio, or improvise my own composition that I'm never going to let anyone else hear because it's too embarrassing but it's really fun to make up." So do something creative or do something you're already successful at as your musical reward for doing the less fun parts of your practicing.

Reviewing Repertoire

Rachel: I feel like I still hark back to the Suzuki philosophy with what I do with my own practice routine and what I advise advanced students to do with review repertoire. Of course, we're not going to be studying the Brahms Concerto and still practicing our Twinkles every day . . . but I see so many students who practice three or four hours a day, playing only music that they don't play well.

What I mean is, a student is usually doing new things that they haven't yet mastered, and that means that all day every day they are only practicing things that they don't yet play well. That's so unhealthy! And then you say to somebody, "Play something for me," and they don't really have anything. How can any musician who has been studying their instrument for 12 years say, "Oh, I don't have anything I can play for you"?

In those cases, it's clear that that person never really does review repertoire. Your teacher is no longer going to ask you for an old piece—you're not going to get to your lesson and have them say, "Okay, let's hear the Mendelssohn," before they work on your Brahms.

But for yourself, even if it's just 10 minutes a day, you need to work on something you've already mastered. You need to keep some polished music going in your life so you can play expressively every day. Sometimes people turn to alternative styles for that purpose, folk or fiddle music, or jazz or rock. Whatever you can do in your life, whether it's review pieces or alternative styles, do it—so that every day has artistry!

Photo by Lisa-Marie Mazzucco

Listening to Music

Christine: *When you were younger, how much did you listen to music as you were learning a piece?*

Rachel: What I always advise [students to do] is to listen to a variety of recordings. Even with my daughter, I have three different versions of Suzuki Book One, plus sometimes I play it for her myself and sometimes we spend a couple weeks just singing it. We mix it up.

When you're learning more advanced repertoire, it's really dangerous to buy just one recording. When a young player has downloaded only one performer's version, he or she can fall into the danger of imitating someone too closely.

"Getting everything right is the point at which we actually start working. That's the beginning, not the end."

It's important to listen to enough quantity of people that you can get a sense of where everyone seems to do the same thing, and where they are really very different from one another. You can do some basic listening so you just get a feel for what the piece sounds like at a very macro level, and then you want to do conscious listening for details, like where exactly do they take time, how much do they vibrate on different notes, where do they put their slides, what fingerings are they using (if you're at a stage in your development where you are starting to experiment rather than just copying your teachers), what kind of articulations do they use?

The macro level might be, what tempo are they taking or what mood are they creating for the different sections? The micro is all the little details, and as you start to realize what all the different possibilities are, it really fires up your imagination.

Early on, when I was about six years old, my mom would take me to our local Chicago public library where there was a shelf of children's books about great composers. Every library may not have that, but all of these things are online now. Reading a really great biography will help bring your music to life in a more colorful way.

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> ***"Even if it's just ten minutes a day, you need to work on something you've already mastered. You need to keep some polished music going in your life so you can play expressively every day."***

If the composer wasn't a violinist himself but he wrote his piece for a particular violinist, then you need to read about that violinist's life and personality. When I'm studying the Brahms Concerto I want to know who Joachim was and all about him, because that influences how I'm going to approach the concerto written for him. I love getting in deep, reading about the life of Brahms, reading books about what life was like in Germany during that particular time, and learning about the performing traditions and musical style of that era.

Even for really young kids: read a biography about your composer, read a basic essay about the piece you're learning, and listen to other works by your composer. If you haven't done that, then you haven't truly learned your piece.

I have lots of positive things to say about the Suzuki Method, but one of my concerns is that the book still says A. Vivaldi—it doesn't give you his first name and what part of history he is from by listing his dates. Of course, the book can't tell his whole life story, but any printed sheet music should at least show the normal basics.

With my daughter's music, I cut and pasted each Suzuki song onto a piece of paper on which I re-did the title to actually say the name of the work correctly. For example, Minuet 3 doesn't say Minuet 3, it says Minuet, BWV etc. from the Anna Magdalena notebook, Johann Sebastian Bach and his dates. Then above that I put Baroque Period, so that she can start to associate certain pieces with certain periods just intuitively. Over The Happy Farmer I put Romantic Period, Robert Schumann, etc.

I think that you have to be teaching them these things from the very beginning. It can feel like, why are we even worrying about this stuff? We have enough to do to make sure that you have your feet in the right place and a good bow hand, that you're playing in tune, and looking at your violin and all of those very, very basic things for beginners. But why shouldn't a beginner know that they are playing something from the Baroque period? They absolutely should, because it gives them more meaning and sets them up better for their future understanding of music.

Newest Release

Rachel Barton Pine's new CD, Testament: Bach's Complete Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin (Avie Records) was released on April 1, 2016, shortly after our interview.

Christine: *I saw that you have a new CD coming out and I wondered if you would talk a little bit about it. I was able to hear a preview of it and it was just beautiful.*

Rachel: Normally, when I record Baroque music, I do it on a Baroque violin, but with the Bach Sonatas and Partitas, I usually perform them in mixed programs. Because I'm not bringing two violins with me, I just switch bows and use a Baroque bow with my modern violin [the "ex-Bazzini ex-Soldat" 1742 Guarneri "del Gesu," on lifetime loan from an anonymous patron].

On my recording, I offer a very historically informed interpretation with a modern violin [tuned] at A=440. That's the artistic statement I wanted to leave to the world, but pedagogically speaking, I'm actually really thrilled that that's the Bach that I have out there.

If I did another period instrument recording, it would be like, "Well, okay, that's how you play it on Baroque violin, but my kid isn't learning Baroque violin." By doing it on a modern violin, it shows that you can include certain elements of historically-informed style which are going to actually enhance the music—and do it on a modern violin with a Baroque bow. These days, you can get a decent Baroque bow online for as little as $50, but be sure that it's made out of snakewood, not permanbuco, or it won't function correctly.

My printed edition of the (Bach) Sonatas and Partitas is going to be published by Carl Fischer simultaneously with the CD. I'm hoping that it will be another useful resource for people who are interested in playing and teaching Bach in a more Baroque way.

My edition will be the first that gives completely historically-informed bowings and fingerings for use on a modern violin, ideally paired with a Baroque bow (though you could certainly try to execute it with a modern bow). Also, unlike most editions that just give bowings and fingerings, I indicate polyphonically where to hold the notes and where not to, using Ysaye's funny little circle with a slash through it. I also have dynamic gradations and hairpins to show chord intensities and phrasings. It's very heavily edited, but I figured if I'm going to edit it, why not go all the way?

After all, I don't need to worry about leaving the page clean—if you want to see what Bach wrote, then get an urtext! No matter what edited edition you own, you also need an urtext in your life for comparison. So I just decided to go all out with my edition and put all of the dynamics in there—not that I expect or want anyone to copy me exactly, but hopefully it will inspire people to understand the emphases in the dance movement, to listen for minor key chords versus major key chords, or unresolved versus resolved, and they will start to get the idea of how to approach the music with a more stylistically Baroque perspective.

Christine: *I understand that you were able to record your new CD in the church where you were inspired to play as a child.*

Rachel: Absolutely—I was very lucky. When I was three years old, there were some middle school aged girls playing in my church, St. Pauls UCC in Chicago, and I just fell in love with the sound of the violin. I was very lucky to grow up in a congregation with a very strong music ministry focused on classical music and the old favorite hymns by Mendelssohn, Handel, etc. The organist would play Bach Toccatas and Fugues just for the prelude in a worship service, and we even have a stained glass window of Bach in the sanctuary. It was just a wonderful place to grow up surrounded by that music.

Growing up with music in this way, I learned that classical music isn't just on stage in concert halls, it is part of life. Whatever one's religious beliefs are, we can all have a sense of music coming from something greater than ourselves and that our purpose as musicians is to be a conduit to share that music with those listening. It's not just about a pleasant diversion or yet another entertainment

option. What we do has greater meaning: great music, especially great classical music, uplifts the spirit and nurtures the soul.

That's one of the reasons I never get nervous when I perform, because I feel that being on stage is no different than being at the altar and playing as part of a worship service—I'm there to join together with the listeners in this experience. There is no threat to the self because it's not about the self. Of course, being very prepared is another necessary requirement to prevent nervousness!

Rachel Barton Pine as a Student

Christine: *What kind of student were you as a child?*

Rachel: I was a total geek. For example, when I was about to go to the Meadowmount School at age 10, the original plan was for me to stay in the dorms. They have a five-hour-a-day practice rule, and they actually patrol the halls and listen to make sure you're really doing it. So my teacher was explaining to me about this boot camp kind of scenario.

In those days, Meadowmount was eight weeks long, so it was really intense. I started crying, and Mrs. Vamos said, "Rachel, I know you can do it, it won't be a problem—you can do your five hours a day. All of my students have managed," and I said, "Mrs. Vamos, why are they going to make me stop after only five hours? What if I want to do more!" I was so upset thinking that I would only be allowed to do five hours. She told me, "Rachel, if you want to get along socially with the other kids, don't let them know you feel that way!"

The second time she said something similar to this was over my enthusiasm for etudes. I would play my etude for Mr. Vamos every week and get the next one. Coming out of my lessons, I would say, "Yay, I just got Mazas Number 23!" and at a certain point, Mrs. Vamos said, "Rachel, you might want to cut that out if you want to fit in."

> ***"It's not just about a pleasant diversion or yet another entertainment option. What we do has greater meaning: great music, especially great classical music, uplifts the spirit and nurtures the soul."***

My particular personality when growing up as a music student has not been very useful to me as a teacher, because I didn't experience certain types of angst that many students have. I got excited about seeing things get gradually better and better, even if it was painstaking. My up-bow staccato took three years before it was even vaguely mediocre, so not everything came easily, but somehow I derived a great deal of enjoyment from the process and I had a very intense attention span.

However, there were certainly other things in life that I did not enjoy doing - whether it was a chore or my grammar homework. So in teaching, I try to apply what I learned about making myself do those things when working with a kid who might not be quite as excited to get Mazas No. 23.

Photo Courtesy of Park Ridge Civic Orchestra

Suzuki Parenting

Christine: *You mentioned that your own daughter has started Suzuki violin lessons. How has this changed your perspective?*

Rachel: First of all, I just have so much admiration for teachers of beginners, like my daughter's teacher, Isabelle Rozendaal. Watching her has made me realize how much the foundation and the fundamentals are instilled from the very earliest moments. Somehow in your biography, it tends to be your final artist teacher who gets all the credit—I'm guilty in my own biography (there's not room to list everything), but I'm now realizing just how much I owe to my first teacher. Her name is Christine Due. She got me started really well, and I'm realizing that with my own daughter, her earliest lessons are going to set her up for better or worse for the rest of her life. Isabelle is doing a magnificent job and I just have so much admiration for her and for all of her colleagues out there doing that important work.

I also have such a newfound respect for practicing parents! What a commitment and sacrifice it is to practice with your kid every day and focus on everything. Wow! I almost took it for granted with my own mom (as many of us probably do), but even as a teacher, when I work with students at the concerto level, if they are still young enough for their parents to be part of the scenario, those parents take notes and work with their kids every day. I used to think, "Well, of course they're doing that," but now that I'm doing it myself, I'm like, "Oh my gosh, this is a major job!" I thought that when I was finished breastfeeding my daughter, my most time-consuming commitment was over for the rest of her life, but now I think it's sort of a tie between the violin practice and the nursing.

Christine: *Regardless of what your daughter ends up doing with the violin, what is one thing you hope to teach her about music?*

Rachel: My goal for my daughter is that she will understand music and that she will love music. I think that the more

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> ***"My parents were surprised by who they got… I am still learning about who I got. I'm going to discover who my daughter is at some point and have to adjust my life accordingly."***

you are able to understand music, the more you are able to enjoy it. Whatever she does for her profession, or to make a living, I want her to be able to play well enough that she can really appreciate concerts as a listener and do fun things as a player—whether it's going in a fiddle direction or playing with other people in chamber groups and orchestra.

I want her to have specifically classical music in her life and hopefully also enjoy other music as well. To be a fan of music and to live a life in music —I think that's really important for every child.

The lesson I learned from my own childhood is that you can't predict what your kid is going to want or need. My parents—neither played an instrument—were both math majors and expected me to be on the math and science track. I was very advanced in math, but that was not where my passions lay. I was lucky that they were willing to sacrifice and help me follow my dream. They had no clue that their kid would want to be a musician! They certainly didn't have their own ambition for me to be a violinist—it was more like "Don't you want to put that thing down and go ride your bike?" "Do you really need to go to all these rehearsals?" "Are you absolutely sure?" The fact that my parents were surprised by who they got… and well, I am still learning about who I got. I'm going to discover who my daughter is at some point and have to adjust my life accordingly. It will be interesting!

Performing

Christine: *What impact do you hope your music has on your audience?*

Rachel: I always hope that I can attract the classical connoisseurs who come with a very knowledgeable perspective as well as total novices—people who might have been turned on to classical because of some of the outreach I do like playing Paganini on a rock radio station or just having an interview in a mainstream newspaper.

My goal is to perform with a level of sophistication that engages the diehard classical music fans and yet to also play viscerally enough to connect with someone who is just listening to the pure emotions on a gut level, even if they don't know the music's history or structure. To do both simultaneously is always my goal, so that I can reach everybody in the crowd.

Music should be an emotional journey for everyone. I hope that the connoisseur thinking, "I wonder how she's going to interpret this particular spot?" or "Isn't it interesting that over here there is a countermelody that is inverted in the second recapitulation?" will get so caught up in what he or she is feeling that they stop all that thinking.

Meanwhile, hopefully the novice who may be thinking things like, "What is going on? What's that wind instrument over there called? Why is she doing that with her bow?" will also stop thinking and start feeling.

That's not to say that I don't want my interpretations to be very intellectual. After all, I spend countless hours researching and crafting my interpretations, but in the end, I want the study and analysis to be at the service of the story I am telling—ultimately, it is all about the story. But the stories can only be effective if they are grounded in something real—which is where the study comes in ahead of time.

The last thing I want anyone to think is, "Oh look, she played that set of octaves in tune," because I'm not just an athlete. I have to be athletic for my art to be effective, but I'm not there to show off my technique for its own sake—because that would be an artistic failure.

Final Thoughts

Christine: *Is there anything else you'd like to add?*

Rachel: There are a lot of different methods out there—there are some important historic ones that we can still learn something from, and there are various interesting contemporary ones.

There are teachers whom you might call pedagogical fundamentalists who think that there is only one right way for every student, but I don't think that any method is ever going to be absolutely perfect for everyone. The best teachers find out what works for them, and then might even customize it further based on the individual student. They have their beliefs but can also be flexible.

I think that the Suzuki method has so much to offer. The repertoire is limited, so it's important to supplement, but I don't think that's a knock on Suzuki. Some people say that, because it's mostly music from the Baroque and Classical eras, something is wrong with it—absolutely not! These are some of the greatest composers and some of the melodies that were actually performed by professionals in the nineteenth century (in fancier concert versions). I think it's still very important to be grounded in this repertoire. Also, the fact that so many kids around the world know these pieces and that it's a shared language is another motivation for continuing to use the Suzuki books.

Rachel with her daughter Sylvia catching a ride with Marilyn Kesler at the Blue Lake Suzuki Institute.

There is literally not a single method that has everything and doesn't need to be supplemented. Besides exploring music from different countries and centuries, you may also want to supplement regionally—we live in Chicago, so I have my daughter learning the 12-bar blues because that is our indigenous music and she ought to know it. If we lived in Virginia, I might be more focused on Appalachian fiddling, and if we lived in Texas, I might do some Mariachi, etc. Then, of course, you need to add scales and etudes, music by women composers and black composers, etc. And every child should be encouraged to improvise and write their own music from the very beginning.

Most of us get guidance about morals and ethics from more than one source: religious texts, parents, teachers, and faith leaders. Similarly, you don't get all of your information about music from just your primary method book—you get other ideas from elsewhere too, and it doesn't mean that there is anything wrong with the book.

In our family, I think of the Suzuki repertoire as the main course. With my daughter, we're doing the appetizers—the preparatory exercises, and the side dishes—like Ode to Joy while learning Lightly Row (it fits in so well and who wants to wait to play Beethoven!), and then dessert... that would be her 12-bar blues. It's not a knock on the main course if you also want to have some appetizers, side dishes and desserts!

To find out more about Rachel Barton Pine, visit www.RachelBartonPine.com, and find her podcast "Violin Adventures" on iTunes. She also has available the Wohlfahrt etude books with DVDs (so students can visually see the bowings) and musical ideas marked on the page. You can read more about her foundation to support young artists at http://www.rbpf.org/.

Christine Goodner is a Suzuki Violin, Viola & Suzuki Early Childhood Education teacher in Hillsboro, OR. She started Suzuki violin at the age of three, has a 4 year degree in Education & has extensive teacher training through the SAA. Christine runs an active studio in Oregon and is currently serving as the President of the Oregon Suzuki Association. You can read more of her writing on her blog: www.SuzukiTriangle.com and she is also the author of an upcoming book on the mindset of successful Suzuki families.

Repetition Revisited: How Recent Research on Learning Might Inform Our Teaching Strategies

Thoughts on the Book *Make It Stick: The Science of Successful Learning*

By Katharine Austin

It's exciting when new research comes along to make us re-examine some of our longstanding beliefs about how to teach. Since many of us have been at it for years and have enjoyed seeing our students flourish, it's fair to say, "We must be doing *something* right." While that's true, there may be aspects of our teaching that can be improved if we're willing to consider what current research is telling us about how students learn best.

That's the aim of a recent book titled *Make It Stick: The Science of Successful Learning* by two distinguished Washington University psychology professors and researchers, Henry L. Roediger III and Mark A. McDaniel, along with writer Peter Brown. It's a study of some of the major keys to learning, and many of those keys are contrary to commonly-held beliefs. Right up front, the authors assert that most of us hold outdated myths about how to acquire knowledge and skills (which, of course, affects how we teach), and those old ways are deeply engrained, making it hard to accept new research. They're the first to admit that the results of some of their studies may seem counterintuitive and difficult to accept.

To drill or not to drill?

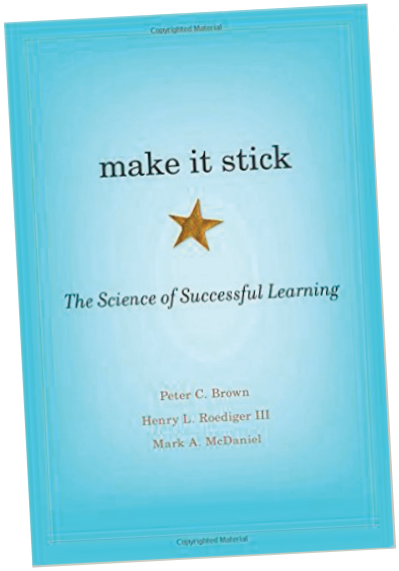
A featured "common myth" discussed in *Make it Stick* is familiar to most of us: Doing multiple repetitions (assuming they are correct ones) is the best way to learn and retain a skill. Most of us believe that repetitions have the power to "drill in" the skills we're pursuing—and the more correct reps the better! Dr. Suzuki's aphorism, "Knowledge is not a skill; knowledge plus 10,000 times is a skill," comes quickly to mind. My own childhood piano teacher had a made-up verb for drilling a tough spot in the score: "to oscar." To this day I don't know where she got the term, but I knew what it meant: "drill it!"

Scientists now tell us, though, that practice consisting of multiple repetitions of a single skill, called "massed practice," is not the best way to master it and make it stick. According to the research, in the case of motor skill practice, repetitive drill does not allow the mind and body to learn from *comparing* one action or motion to another. If we're doing just one thing—for example playing the same scale 25 times in a row—during that time, we have no other action to compare it to, and as it turns out, that's precisely what we need in order to improve that skill. When we drill practice we do show what the scientists call "momentary strength," but we do not gain "underlying habit strength," which is what we really need. Apparently, massed practice is just a way to spin our wheels (or, to translate a French phrase, "pedal in the sauerkraut"). Thus, in this example, it would be better to mix up the practice by playing different scales, in different ways, while mixing in, say, arpeggios, chord progressions, etc. In this way, we gain more motor skill from experiencing the differences, similarities, and relationships among the exercises.

Though the authors of *Make It Stick* do not discuss musical instrument practice specifically, I believe the experiments on motor skill practice are relevant—and the results are surprising! For example, when students were given practice regimens with the goal to learn how to throw a beanbag into a container three feet away, those whose practice consisted *only* of throwing multiple times into the three-feet-away container acquired less skill than those who practiced throwing into containers placed at several different distances—none of which was actually three feet away! Those latter students did better because they had the advantage of practice that compared one distance to another, which improved their learning and gave them better precision when it came to the target distance.

Another of many examples addresses "interleaved" practice (mixing up the skills practice) and is from baseball: when working on batting, a player gains more skill if he practices hitting, say, 60 balls of several different types (for example, fastballs, curveballs and changeups) thrown in random order, as opposed to 20 of just one type, followed by 20 of the next, and 20 of the last type. Better results were achieved when the batter "interleaved" his skill practice, rather than drilled on one thing at a time.

We often assume that the batter (and our own students) should keep working on one skill until it's mastered (or greatly improved) before moving on to the next, but the authors of *Make It Stick* counter that assumption. Instead they insist, "Research shows unequivocally that mastery and long-term retention are much better if you interleave practice than if you mass it."[1] Interleaving "improves your ability to transfer learning from one situation and apply it successfully to another... You develop a broader understanding of the relationships between different conditions and the movements required to succeed in them; you discern context better and develop a more flexible movement vocabulary—different movements for different situations."[2]



Though interleaved practice leads to greater mastery, it's a challenge to implement it. The authors caution that doing interleaved practice will sometimes feel more difficult and confusing than just doing one thing over and over

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gain. Progress may seem slower, not faster. While drilling on a single skill, it may seem to be working, and because that is so, we may develop a false sense of accomplishment that only leads us further down the wrong path. The benefits of mixed skill practice are not readily apparent during the process, and in some cases it may seem pointless to be moving on to a new (or different) skill before mastering the previous skill.

I believe teachers might partially solve these problems by bringing focus to lessons and practice assignments using Suzuki's "single point" strategy in teaching repertoire. The "single point" idea is an excellent one because the student works on that one issue (whether it be dynamics, or balance, or steady tempo, or any other aspect) in *many different* repertoire contexts. As the student focuses on one issue in different pieces, he is experiencing varying conditions, and transferring learning (motor skills and other aspects of learning) from one piece to another. With a focal point, I think the student can avoid drilling, interleave the material he practices, and still have a way of organizing the practice session.

What about repeated listening to recordings of repertoire prior to learning to play those pieces by ear?

Shouldn't the recorded repertoire be played hundreds of times for students before they start lessons?

While "music in the environment" is not specifically addressed in *Make It Stick,* I conclude from reading the book that unless a student is attentive and engaged with the music while the recordings are playing, mere "multiple exposures" to the repertoire would not be an effective learning strategy.

Many interesting examples of the limitations and ineffectiveness of "multiple exposure" learning are given in the book. As a little self-quiz, the authors suggest you go online to one of several sites that test your "penny memory." Despite countless exposures to pennies you, like most people, may fail to pick out the real penny from a set of imposters. If we come to know one thing from current research, it's that the brain must be actively engaged with the material, whatever it may be, in order to learn and retain it.

In teaching music, when we ask parents to play recordings for beginning students, it is in the hope that the students will learn to audiate (hear the music in their minds and keep it in memory when it is not playing), so that eventually they will be able to play the music by ear. To be sure, some of our young students will be highly attuned to music in the environment, will grasp onto it quickly, and might be able to hear the melodies in their minds after only a few plays. At the other end of the spectrum, some children may be more or less oblivious to the recorded music no matter how many times it plays in the background.

Either way, to give all beginning students the best chance, and as a way to help them experience the music more fully, and from different angles, we (and parents) would do well to engage them with activities such as humming, singing, clapping, dancing, marching, guided listening activities and games, etc. Just as learning one's native language involves the child's active attention and participation in making sounds, followed by words, as well as ongoing interaction with parents and others in expressing needs, wants and feelings through sounds and words, likewise, active engagement would be most effective during the first stages of learning music.

What about retaining repertoire in memory? Doesn't that require a lot of ongoing repetition?

According to McDaniel and Roediger, in order for one to retain something in long-term memory, in this case a mastered repertoire piece, one must review it in such a way that the review practices are spaced further and further apart in time. These reviews are called "retrievals" or "self-quizzes." At first, one might play the newly-polished piece once every day, then perhaps once or twice a week, then once per month, and so on, each time re-studying any places that had mistakes, were poorly executed, or contained memory slips.

Why space out the retrieval practices? Though this may be contrary to what many of us have believed, the point is to let the memory start to fade and allow the piece to get rusty. That will be a *good* thing, according to the scientists. As one puts ever-increasing time intervals between retrieval practices, it will take effort to dredge the piece back up again. When the brain works hard to retrieve something, the material goes deeper into long-term memory, where eventually it will stick more securely and permanently. On the other hand, if one does not space out the retrieval practices, there is little or no effort involved in retrieving the material, and the piece just loops around in short-term memory, never reaching the long-term storage areas of the brain. So yes, we might eventually repeat a piece many times, but not in close succession, and not when we know it will take zero effort. Make the brain work for it!

All the above seems to be good news for Suzuki teachers. Since we want our students' repertoire to accumulate and stick in long-term memory, the research gives us a general guideline on how to help students accomplish that. On the down side, however,

once again we are faced with the fact that learning takes effort. Students may need encouragement and help to avoid frustration when they do review their older repertoire. They will need us to let them know it's okay when they make mistakes in trying to recall their rusty piece. By spacing their reviews, they have actually strengthened their memory "muscles," and they deserve praise for having put in the effort (as long as they correct their mistakes).

In summary, the authors of *Make It Stick* give us unexpected strategies for effective learning and much to ponder as to how these strategies might be incorporated into our teaching. When we revisit the concept of repetition through the authors' eyes, we conclude we should avoid repeating the same thing over and over during skill practice (even if they are *correct* repetitions), but instead, mix up the activities we do in any given practice session; don't expect "repeated exposures" to be an effective learning strategy, instead engage with, pay close attention to, and approach from different angles whatever needs to be learned; and when memorizing music (or any material), retrieve the learned material from memory at spaced intervals.

Despite the difficulties of learning, the tone of *Make it Stick* is upbeat and encouraging. The authors, who are teachers themselves, care deeply about their students' ability to learn and feel badly, a s we do, when students perform poorly due to ineffective study or practice strategies. I especially like the way they summarize their thoughts, by asking students and teachers to embrace the fact that learning is difficult. "You will experience setbacks. These are signs of effort, not of failure. Effortful learning changes your brain, making new connections, building mental models, and increasing your capability,"[3] they write. As music teachers, hopefully we can help our students experience the joy of making music through the use of the most effective learning strategies.

Notes

1. Peter C. Brown, Henry L. Roediger III, Mark A. McDaniel, Make It Stick, The Science of Successful Learning, (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014), 50
2. Ibid., 51
3. Ibid., 201

Katharine Austin grew up in a thoroughly musical environment as the daughter of professional musicians. She holds a BA in Music from Mills College and pursued post- graduate work on her MFA in Electronic Media and Recording Arts at Mills, before taking a 10-year detour to become a sound recording engineer in Francis Ford Coppola's movie studio. More than 25 years ago, with the training, encouragement and inspiration of Caroline Fraser at Holy Names University, she began her career teaching Suzuki piano. For the past several years, she has enjoyed traveling around Northern California as a Certificate of Merit Evaluator for the Music Teachers' Association of California. She serves on the Board of the Suzuki Music Association of California--Bay Area Piano Branch (SMAC-BAPB), and volunteers for the MTAC, Alameda County Branch, as the Honors Chair.

Balancing from the Center:

Clearing the Path to Fluid Left Hand Technique for Violinists and Violists

By Ellen Kogut

Introduction

Left hand balance, or the natural and efficient distribution of weight among the fingers, is an important element of string playing. It contributes to comfort, facility, and consistency of intonation. It is also essential to proper form for extensions and double-stops, which occur throughout the Suzuki violin and viola repertoire.

I became interested in left hand balance several years ago in my own lessons. I had a habit of squeezing the neck with my left thumb, making it difficult to adjust the intonation of double-stops. My teacher, Denise Lupien, taught me to redistribute weight toward the second and third fingers, or center of the hand. This took pressure off the first finger and allowed my thumb to relax, freeing up my hand to make necessary intonation adjustments. I was impressed by this change, and looked for ways to apply it in my teaching.

Figure 1: Excess first finger weight. Note the compaction of the space between first and second finger.

First Finger Weight

It is very common for violin and viola students to load the majority of left hand weight onto the first finger. This compacts the space between the first and second fingers [Figure 1], causing a variety of problems, including:

1. Limited range of motion of all fingers
2. Squeezing of the thumb on the neck, in an effort to counterbalance the excess weight of the first finger
3. Tight vibrato
4. Difficulty reaching up with the fourth finger
5. Difficulty extending the first finger up and down because it is locked into one position

Underlying Causes

Why is left hand imbalance so common? Perhaps because as violinists and violists, we are very oriented toward the first finger, both physically and mentally. Beginners typically learn to place the fingers in consecutive order, "building" them starting with first finger. Later, we identify positions based on the location of the first finger, and use it as the primary guide finger when shifting. While these are generally good habits, they may lead some players to become overly reliant on the first finger.

Posture also plays a role. If a student is using a shoulder rest properly, the weight of the head will fully, or almost fully, support the violin. The body, head, and instrument will counterbalance one another so that the left hand does not have to actively hold the instrument in place. When there is an imbalance of any one of these elements, the left arm and hand will feel the need to compensate and create stability by gripping.

Another explanation for left-hand imbalance is offered by Hungarian pedagogue Kató Havas in *Stage Fright: Causes and Cures*, who suggests that an underlying fear of dropping the instrument may contribute to left hand tension. This can be addressed by rebalancing posture and with exercises such as dropping the hand while practicing.

The Center Model

In the center model, the second and third fingers serve as anchors, bearing part of the weight of the left hand and arm [Figure 2]. They act as a core around which the first and fourth fingers pivot. The first and fourth fingers have a lighter and more flexible touch, so they can extend up and back when needed. This distribution of weight:

1. Frees up space in the left hand
2. Eliminates the need for excess thumb counterpressure

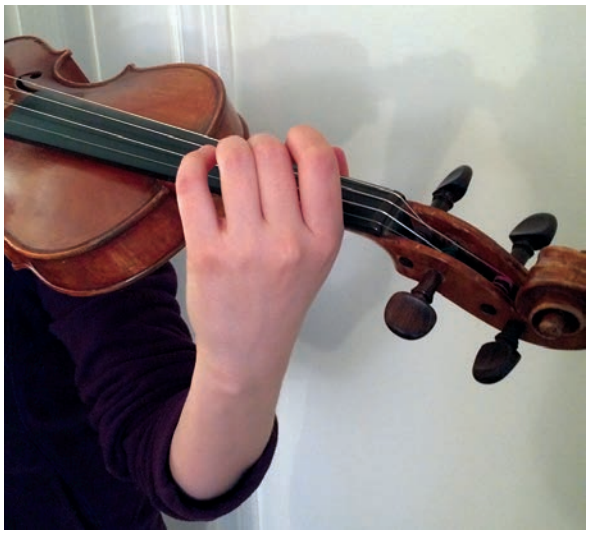

Figure 2: Balancing from the center. Note that each finger has access to its full range of motion.

Figure 3: Hanging exercise with a student.

3. Allows for varied widths of vibrato
4. Allows the fourth finger to reach up easily (and therefore play more consistently in tune)

To get a feel for balancing from the center, rest your scroll on a shelf at chin-level. Set your second and third fingers on the fingerboard in first position and allow your arm to hang from the fingerboard for a few seconds. Feel the weight of your left arm in your fingertips. Then tap your first and fourth fingers lightly, one at a time. Note the different pressures of the core versus the "accessory" fingers. Now, try extending first and fourth finger back and up without disturbing the shape of the center of the hand. Do you notice a difference in terms of their ease of movement? You can try this with a student by holding the scroll in place with your hand [Figure 3].

It is interesting to note that the center model mirrors finger function on the bow. A well-formed bow hold is based around a core of second finger, third finger, and thumb. In general, the first and fourth fingers are complementary to that center. They have a more variable repertoire of pressures that enable different bow strokes, and, in the case of the first finger, allow us to sustain tone in the upper half. Pointing out symmetry between the hands may help the center model click better for some students.

The center model is described in various ways in traditional pedagogy textbooks. In *Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching,* Ivan Galamian discusses the pitfalls of thumb clenching and the importance of maintaining the octave frame in the left hand. He offers an exercise for shifting balance away from the first finger, in which the player sets the fingers consecutively in relation to the fourth. See the exercise for maintaining the octave frame on page 21 of Galamian.

Similarly in *Basics*, Simon Fisher presents exercises that he classifies under "reaching back from the fourth finger" [Figure 4]. He advocates widening at the base joints rather than compacting the hand, and illustrates a hand position for thirds that is based on the third finger (p. 102). Furthermore, he recommends setting the third finger prior to the first, taking care not to disturb its shape. Fisher also advocates different centers of balance based on hand size: first or second finger for large hands, and second finger for small hands. Indeed, the center model may be particularly useful for younger students and those with smaller hands.

Figure 4: Exercise for reaching back from the fourth finger in Simon Fisher, *Basics*, p. 100. *(Used with permission.)*

It is important to acknowledge that the center model respects the design of the hand. It gives each finger, particularly first and fourth, room to separate from its bottom (or metacarpal-phalangeal) joint. Furthermore, the center model allows for more freedom within the palm. As violinists and violists, we move our fingers mostly from the bottom joints, but it is also important to have a feeling of openness in the palm, where the finger bones meet the wrist bones (at the carpo-metacarpal joints). This gives each finger its full range of motion [Figure 5]

Many students are new to the idea that finger bones extend into the palm, so it may be helpful to post a diagram of hand anatomy in your studio, as recommended by Jennifer Johnson in *What Every Violinist Needs to Know About the Body* (p. 4). It can also be helpful to mark the metacarpal joints in marker on students' hands, or tap either side of the metacarpal joint as a student plays a simple passage. When students can envision the location of these joints, they will have a better understanding of why releasing weight from the first finger is advantageous.

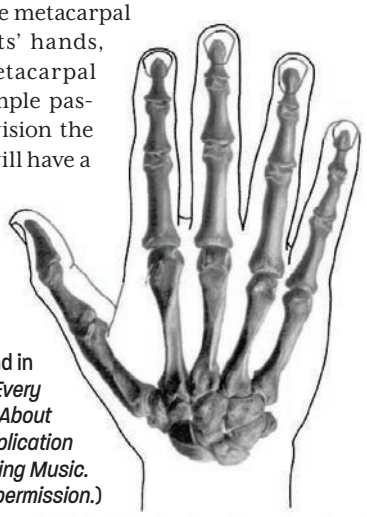

Figure 5: Bones of the left hand in Barbara Conable, *What Every Musician Needs to Know About the Body: The Practical Application of Body Mapping to Making Music. (Used with permission.)*

The Center Model in the Repertoire

In the Suzuki violin repertoire, we first encounter an extension in Book Two, with The Two Grenadiers by Robert Schumann [Figure 6]. According to the center model, the third finger will serve as an anchor throughout the first measure. It will maintain a natural shape and contact the string on its inside corner. The first finger, in contrast, will extend back and contact the string more on its side [Figure 7a, 7b]. It will be lighter than the third finger.

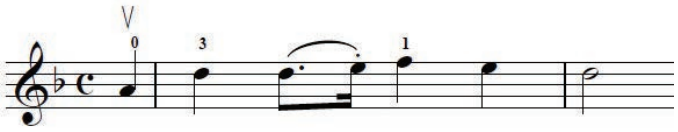

Figure 6: Opening of The Two Grenadiers in *Suzuki Violin School Volume 2 Revised Edition*, 19.

Continued on p. 56

Balancing, continued from p. 53

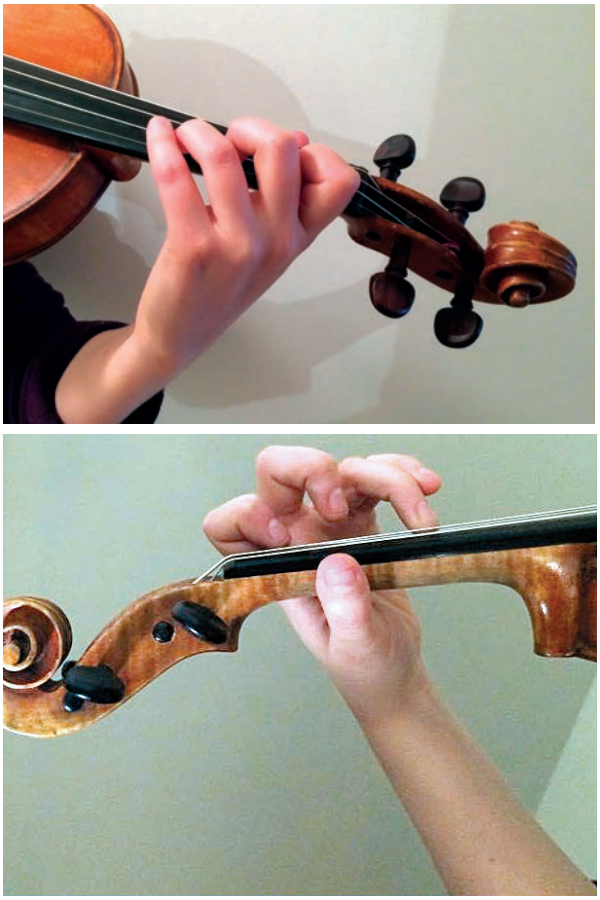

Figure 7a and 7b: Balance of left hand for opening of Two Grenadiers. Note how the third finger serves as an anchor while first finger extends back.

In my teaching, I call third finger the "rock" and first finger the "feather" to emphasize their different roles. I make sure students understand that weight distribution is all relative: the second and third fingers need only enough weight to press the string to the fingerboard and produce clear tone. These fingers should anchor the hand without squeezing.

It may be helpful to use the following D minor Tonalization as a preview to Two Grenadiers. This exercise allows students to focus their attention on left hand balance and tone production. Listen for the ringing tone on D both times that it is played. Note that if a student shifts weight to the F-natural, rather than keeping it light, the intonation of the final D will usually be flat, as a result of it being "pulled back" towards first finger.

If we fast-forward in the violin repertoire to Corelli's La Folia in Book Six, the same D and F-natural occur as a double-stop at measures 85 and 161. Of course, the same hand configuration and distribution of weight should apply here. The above D minor Tonalization is applicable here, as well.

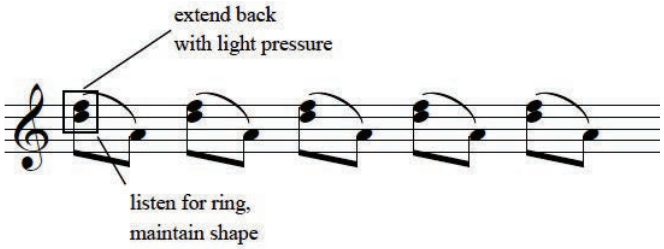

Figure 8: D minor Tonalization exercise.

A student with good left hand balance will be able to tune this minor third in this measure by adjusting the first finger only (assuming the D is a ringing tone to begin with). A student whose left hand is off-balance will try to tune both notes of the double-stop simultaneously. This is, of course, a poorly-conceived strategy. I think that tuning a double-stop is a lot like searching for a friend in the woods; it is best when one person searches while the other stays put! Therefore, one finger should remain constant while the other adjusts to it. Most of the time, one of the anchor fingers will be the constant to which one of the accessory fingers adjusts. Students can encourage the first finger to adjust independently of the third by raising then lowering the upper pitch by a quartertone (or in terms of pitch frequency, 50 "cents"). They can find their way back to the original pitch each time by listening for the purity of the interval.

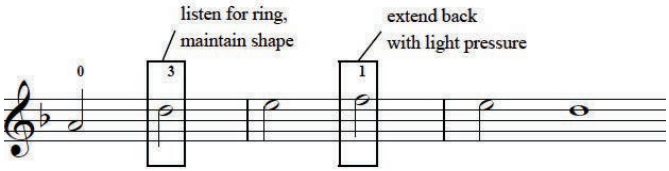

Figure 9: Measure 161 from Corelli's La Folia in Shinichi Suzuki, *Suzuki Violin School Volume 6, 9*.

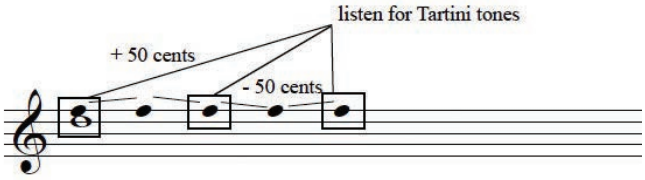

Figure 10: Double-stop tuning exercise for La Folia.

By Book Six, students should be able to recognize the difference (or "Tartini") tones that occur when the notes of a third or sixth are played perfectly in tune, as well as the unique sonorities of perfect fourths, fifths, and octaves.* They should be able to make the adjustments that are needed to create perfectly-tuned intervals by balancing from the center of the hand. Outside of the Suzuki repertoire, Josephine Trott's two volumes of *Melodious Double Stops* are excellent for reinforcing these skills.

* This can be trained by playing scales and Book One repertoire in double-stops, first as duets with the teacher, then alone.

The above examples illustrate the hand position for one particular interval, D and F-natural, played melodically and harmonically. The center model, however, can be applied throughout violin Books Two and Three, especially in pieces like Witches' Dance by Paganini and Gavotte in G minor by JS Bach, as well as in Concerto in G minor by Vivaldi in Book Five. If we are careful about left-hand balance in this early repertoire, students will have a clear path in front of them as they progress to more advanced pieces.

Beginner Students

Books Two and Three are great places to start applying the center model, but ideally teachers should set students up with proper left hand balance from the beginning. Some teachers may want to explore a new order of finger placement in Twinkle, for example, starting with second and third when building fingers.** Another valid approach would be to teach a piece like French Folk Song, which emphasizes the second and third fingers, before Song of the Wind in Book One. Teachers can experiment and share their own ideas about this with one another.

Balance Exercises

It can be very helpful to play two-octaves scales on the second and third fingers only. These can be played in any key and they help recalibrate the left hand toward the center. Two examples are illustrated below [Figure 11].

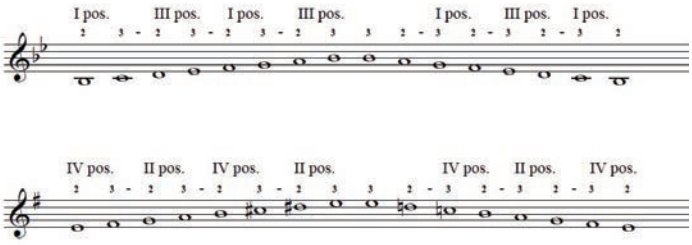

Figure 11: Two-octave scales on second and third finger in B-flat Major and E minor.

Of course, these fingerings require advanced shifting skills. For younger students who do not yet shift, the exercise on the following page may be more suitable. Parts I and II of this exercise establish the centrality of second and third fingers through isolation and repetition. Part III encourages the fourth finger to balance off of the center through various four-note patterns. The 33 patterns shown utilize the second, third and fourth fingers at least once each; other patterns are certainly possible. I have found this exercise to be effective both for "remedial" students with left hand balance issues, as well as for new students learning to set fourth finger for the first time.

Summary

Many violin and viola students put excess weight on the first finger. This limits the range of motion of the left hand and causes a variety technical problems, including difficulty reaching fourth finger. Balancing from the center, or second and third fingers, corrects these issues and clears the path to more fluid left-hand technique. The "center model" is alluded to in various violin pedagogy textbooks, and it applies to many pieces in the Suzuki violin and viola literature, starting with The Two Grenadiers. In the first measure of this piece, students can practice balancing on the third finger while extending the first finger back. This principle applies to extensions and double-stops in the later Suzuki repertoire and more advanced supplemental repertoire. Students can recalibrate left-hand balance through scales on second and third finger, and through the Balance Etude provided. Teachers may also want to experiment with teaching finger placement in a different order at the Pre-Twinkle level, in order to encourage good balance early on in students' development.

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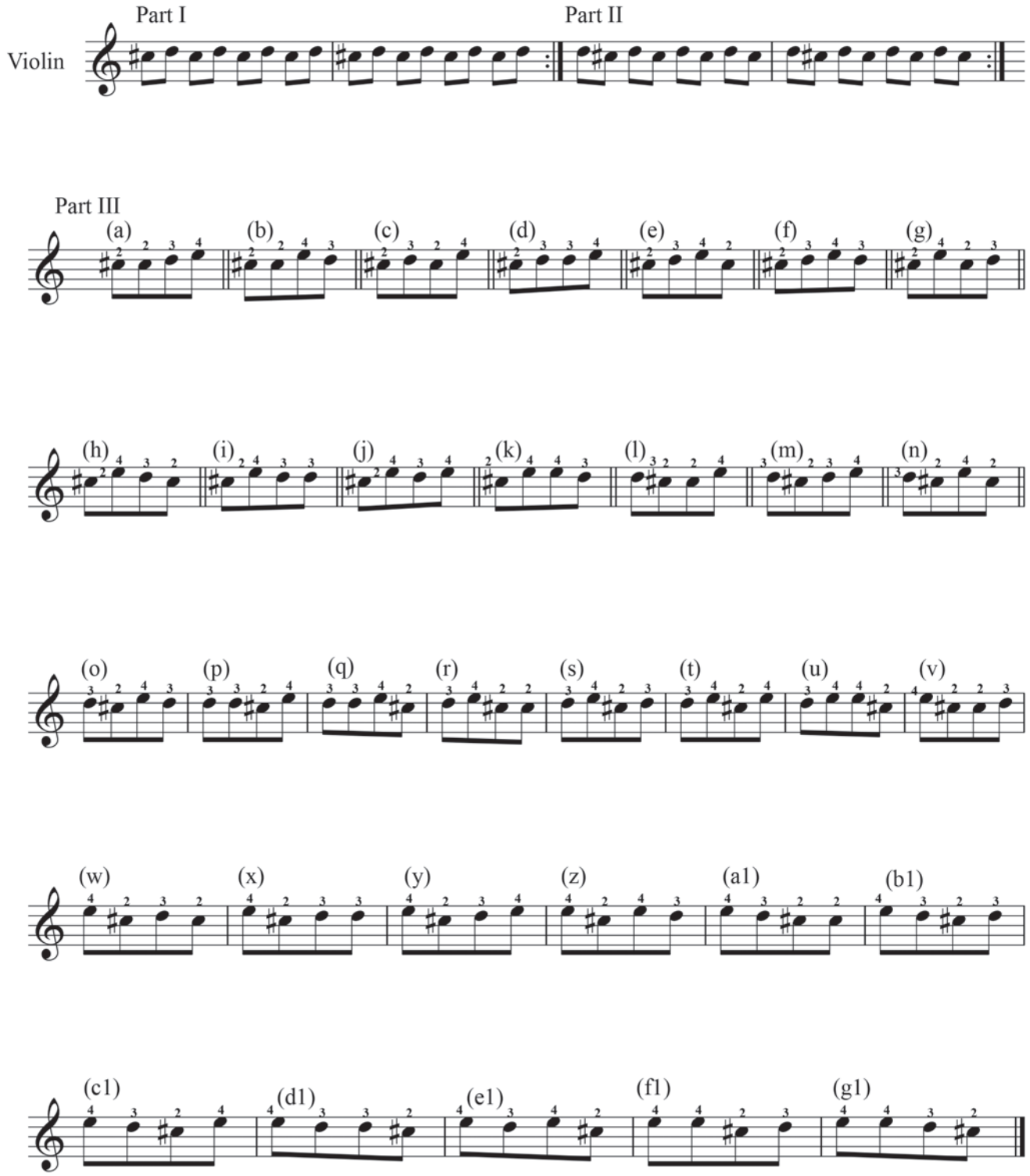
Ellen Kogut holds Master's degrees in Suzuki Pedagogy from Ithaca College and in Violin Performance from McGill University. She has taught at Suzuki workshops and institutes in Canada and the U.S., and maintains an active performing career as a chamber and orchestral musician. In addition to being a member of the SAA, Ellen is a member of Suzuki Musique Montrēal and is certified as an Advanced Specialist in Violin through the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto.

Instructions: play parts I and II, then one pattern in part III.
Always repeat parts I and II before going on to another pattern in part III

Balance Etude

Ellen Kogut



Confessions of a Suzuki Mother

By Kirby Kay

I grew up in a Suzuki family, as did my husband, and we are now both Suzuki teachers. I have absolutely no doubt of the benefits and joys of becoming proficient at an instrument. I understand the value of discipline that comes along with the field of instrumental study. I have experienced and seen the impact of the relationships that are nurtured and developed through this field. I am also a mother who deeply desires all of the wonderful things that come along with learning an instrument for my son. But I have a confession: I find myself fearful to officially begin lessons with my four year old boy.

Before sharing my fears in regards to starting official violin lessons with my son, I believe it is important to preface them with the following. Often times when I find myself hesitating or nervous about what I am about to embark on—big or small—there is a reason behind it. That reason is linked to my confidence and willingness to grow in any given area. When I choose to wrestle through challenges I am faced with, I find myself examining my heart and discovering what is really going on internally. Rather than being held back by an attitude of doubt, working through obstacles gives me an opportunity to put that fear in my rear view mirror, and what I end up with is a richer understanding of myself and my capacity to grow and develop. I have a deep desire for my son to face life head on and develop the confidence to try, regardless of what might be holding him back. One way I hope to model this is by taking my fears about music lessons and turning them into challenges that we can work together to overcome.

Photo by Dekaios Design

It will be a challenge for us to practice every day and figure out how to practically fit a practice plan into our lives. In a day and age when lots of families have two working parents, and a plethora of scheduled activities are offered to children, I wonder how Dr. Suzuki would navigate this culture. According to an interview with Laurie MacKinnon (published therapist and psychologist) and Bruce Perry (clinician and researcher in children's mental health and the neurosciences) published by the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Family Therapy, "We know that to change any neural network in the brain we need to provide some form of patterned, repetitive activity. One of the fundamentals of neural change is activity—or use-dependence. Any neural network that is activated in a repetitive way will change."[1] This is a charge for careful practice to be part of our family life, rather than being considered an extra. What great evidence Dr. Perry has given us to support Dr. Suzuki's quote, "Practice only on the days you eat."

Another quote by Dr. Suzuki that has further been supported by recent evidence is "knowledge plus ten thousand times is skill." Daniel Coyle, author of *The Little Book of Talent* and *The Talent Code*, discusses this idea when he writes, "Repetition is the single most powerful lever we have to improve our skills, because it uses the built-in mechanism for making the wires of our brains faster and more accurate."[2] He presents the facts of a substance called myelin in our brains that gets thicker the more circuits fire in our brain. The thicker the myelin, the faster and more accurate we are able to execute a task; such as balancing body posture, setting a finger, pulling a bow stroke, or preparing the lungs or embouchure.

It will be a challenge to stick with our practice plan week after week. The relationship that happens between parent, child, and teacher is an intense one. On a weekly basis, my son and I will be held accountable for our assignments. I want both my son and I to own our responsibility in this triangle. While he and I will work as a team, I want to maintain his separate-ness from me. In order to do this, I must model and carry out my responsibilities wisely. I do not want to disappoint my son's teacher or my son on weeks when practicing does not look the way we want it to. This could look different on any given day and I believe the problem is two-fold.

Firstly, I have the most fantastic families in my studio—some of whom practice extremely regularly, and some for whom this discipline is much more of a struggle. For the latter, I understand this can be a rather complex situation. We are living in a culture of over-scheduled children, and it takes intentionality to maintain free time. Every family's idea of discipline can look very different in day-to-day life—and I find discipline to be one of the hardest elements of lessons. While we can predict many elements of our day, often things creep in that can alter the course of a practice plan, regardless of the best intentions. Maybe there is a big transition the child is working through, the family dog gets fleas, there is an extra event at school, grandpa or grandma come to visit, or any number of everyday occurrences that must be dealt with as they arise. What if, for instance, when practice time rolls around, an incident from the child's school erupts in the child's mind that leaves them with big feelings that they might need help processing. Sometimes children are able to interpret and articulate what they are feeling, and sometimes not. I hope I am a teacher and practice parent who will prioritize the needs of the child in

Continued on p. 60

Confessions, continued from p. 59

front of me while balancing standards of discipline and flexibility and understanding.

Secondly, there is also the issue of what happens once practice begins. My father is an orchestra conductor and taught me this lesson over years of talking about rehearsals. He would often plan a certain amount of time for passages in a symphony he deemed difficult, according to technical demands or previous experience. I remember him reflecting on how sometimes the things he deemed harder breezed by in rehearsal and the easier things took way more time than he originally anticipated. I hope that I can be sensitive to the level of difficulty my son is experiencing and not my idea of what I think should be easy or hard for him.

I want to approach practicing as a time to teach my son how to problem solve—not for us to always end up with a finished product, rather to work together to learn how to work. In remembering that my son is an individual, I want his shortcomings and my own shortcomings to be handled with grace and kindness – and without judgement and labels. I already feel a great responsibility to my son's teacher each week and I hope he can develop his own sense of responsibility to her that is long-lasting and self-motivated.

It will be an ever-changing challenge and balance to match my son's ability with his new challenges. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, a Hungarian psychologist, named the concept of flow. According to his book The Psychology of Optimal Performance, flow occurs when a task is not too hard and not too easy.[3] It is important for children to stay within optimal frustration to create a positive learning environment and breed motivation. I need to discover how to be an expert on what my son needs to maintain motivation from week to week, month to month, and year to year.

It will be a challenge for me to listen to the Suzuki CDs at least once a day. I have heard the music on the Suzuki CDs every year of my life. Sometimes I cannot stand the monotony. I have quite a variety of musical interests, but I have to work hard to help my son internalize the music over a long period of time. Parents often share this sentiment with me when I express my tendency to become bored with the same music over and over again—but it is completely worth every moment of internal strife to create a no-fail environment for my son.

It will be a challenge for me to go the extra step to find and create enrichment opportunities for my son—both in the time it takes to plan and schedule these events and the extra cost that goes into supporting them. There is no debating the value of symphony concerts, alternative genre concerts, narrated stories or movies with beautiful music, opportunities to talk with and meet live artists who are performing and sharing today. I do know, however, maintaining enrichment opportunities does take intentionality and effort.

It will be a challenge for me to know how to support my son as he becomes proficient at his instrument. I have no plans for my son to become a professional musician. I see an incredible amount of character development possibilities through the journey that lies ahead of us. I find it thrilling that the level of musicianship in our country is so high there are not even jobs for all who are interested. I know from experience and observation, however, that children often enjoy most what they are good at. Children have a gift to trust what they know, feel, and experience, rather than false praise—and for this reason I want my son to feel a true sense of accomplishment and pride in his work with his instrument. This will look different through different stages, and I hope to attune myself to needs as they come.

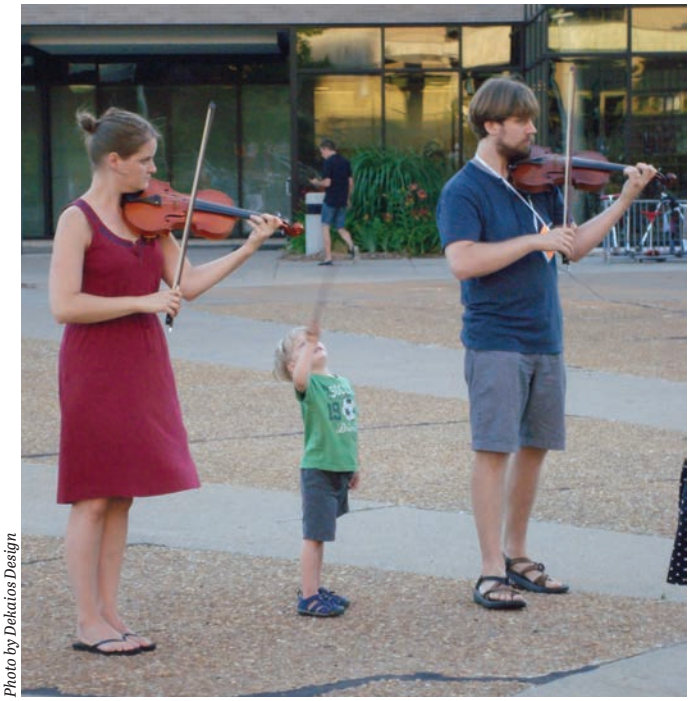


Photo by Dekatos Design

Second and third generations of a Suzuki family enjoy the play-in at the American Suzuki Institute, 2015.

It will be a challenge for me to sit and be with my son when he inevitably faces great disappointments. Perhaps these disappointments will come in little ways from week to week with learning a new technique or finger pattern, or perhaps they will come with facing the disappointment of not making it into an orchestra he worked hard to audition for. I want to be able to be with my son while his feelings are big or overwhelming and and help him to process them. I want to help him either come up with a plan for next time or really let his thoughts and feelings be heard.

I believe one of my biggest challenges in developing character in my son through music and beyond will be to maintain a positive relationship with my son. When my child has a feeling that is important to him, I want to acknowledge his feeling, rather than pushing past it in order to reach a desired outcome. I hope to find the right times to say, "It's fine for you to feel that way, but certain things have to happen even though you feel that way." I see great power in perseverance and developing a strong work ethic that can withstand extreme circumstances. I want to maintain a healthy balance, however, of what I am asking and what my son's emotional needs. I must ask myself what I am really asking, what that means to my son, and how that affects our relationship and time together.

In a presentation given by Nancy Lokken at the 2016 Suzuki Association of the Americas Conference titled, "Creating an Effective At Home Practice Plan," a mother enrolled in the school Nancy directs said, "My practicing with my children reflects the temperature of our relationship." I found this simple statement

extremely profound. As my son's home practice teacher, it is my job to create an environment that fosters learning. Dr. Suzuki says, "Man is son of his environment." Without joy there can be no learning, and that joy comes from us working together in a respectful, efficient way.

In an article titled "Toddler Play: Some Comments on Its Functions in the Developmental Process," author Jan Drucker explains psychologist Jean Piaget's perspective: "He is not interested so much in what the child thinks about as in how he thinks."[4] This is meaningful to me as a parent because in order for me to respect and reach my child, I have to take the time in mundane, everyday moments of crazy life to understand the meaning behind what might be making our tasks dissonant. I want to hold my son to a place of high integrity and expectation, but never without consideration of his needs.

I hope that I can be sensitive to the level of difficulty my son is experiencing and not my idea of what I think should be easy or hard for him.

It will be a challenge for me to be flexible as a Suzuki parent. Certainly not meaning to make excuses for any obstacles that might come our way, Alice Joy Lewis said so beautifully in my teacher training course, "Life is what happens when we make other plans." I want this principle to permeate my thinking and allow for flexibility alongside my drive and desire for my son to grow and progress.

I try to put all of these fears and challenges into words—because I have spent years of my adult life thinking about them in relation to myself, my students and now my son. I also believe most teachers who decide to pursue the field of nurturing young minds and bodies share at least some of my fears and hopes for their students as well. Students who have won leadership positions in prestigious local orchestras or their all-state orchestras, made it into competitive camps, or who have gone on to hold professional musician positions and careers, cannot hold these accomplishments in a vacuum. They become meaningful through the process of achieving something of that caliber. Yet, somehow, as teachers, parents and students, we are left with hurts that seem particularly excruciating—considering the nature and intensity of our relational dynamics.

It will be a challenge for me to thoughtfully consider how I am communicating with my son and his teacher. I will have to continually evaluate what my intent is and what I am hoping to say as well as evaluate what may have been interpreted. Misunderstanding and miscommunication are quite a common occurrence, and have the potential to cause hurt—depending on the severity of the disconnect.

I often see this when interacting with my son. For example, on a day when I have plans to stop by a friend's house for a play date, he might say something to the effect of he doesn't want to visit someone's house, and I might hear him as being contrary. We can find ourselves butting heads, rather than me stopping to wonder why he doesn't want to visit. Perhaps he could just have easily (or not so easily) said he was scared of the dog that is in that house, but his choice of words led me to misinterpret the deeper meaning of what he was trying to communicate. This is a small example of a day-to-day event, but imagine how intricate communication can be with the parent of a student. Parents come to conversations with their teacher with all of their hopes, dreams, fears, confusion, clarity and own interpretation and set of ideas about their child.

When communicating, aiming for a reciprocal desire to work together in creating shared outcomes is important. It is impossible to always know why parents in our studios respond positively or negatively, and dangerous to assume their reasons. Often, misunderstandings are based in wanting the best for children and anxiety that arises from that desire. I would argue, more often than not, responses that seem hurtful or damaging to a relationship are not personal and have little to do with the person feeling the offense. It is helpful to dig deeper, ask another clarifying question, and pursue the heart of what is really being said. Sometimes these hurts can be from cultural differences (global or familial), but most of the time I believe they are based in misunderstanding or missed expectations.

I have firsthand experience with the vast and deep gratification that comes with the transforming feeling of sitting in or leading a section through the richness of a Brahms Symphony, the exhilaration of a Beethoven fugue intimately dancing through a quartet, the intricate writing and brilliance of Tchaikovsky Souvenier de Florence or Mendelssohn Octet while managing one part that is so delicately connected to others, the thrill of practicing sight-reading and applying that skill through the beginning gigs, the art of collaborating and soloing with orchestra, or having time with my instrument alone in a room to experience my music for myself. I have seen more of our world, grown and stretched myself and developed relationships that have taught me how to truly value, respect, and love others as a result of my time with my instrument. For all of these many reasons and lots more, I know that it is absolutely necessary to push through my fears and confidently approach my challenges as a parent and teacher in order to provide the best possible environment that I am able to provide.

Notes

1. Laurie MacKinnon, "The Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics: An Interview with Bruce Perry," The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Family Therapy 33, no. 3 (2012).
2. Daniel Coyle, *The Little Book of Talent* (New York: Bantam, 2012), 97.
3. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience* (New York: HarperCollins, 1990), 74.
4. Jan Drucker, "Toddler Play: Some Comments on its Functions in the Developmental Process," Psychoanalysis and Contemporary Sciences 4 (1975): 479-527.

Kirby Kay grew up with music education as an integral part of her family life. She graduated from the University of Illinois with her Bachelor's of Music in Violin Performance in 2008 and found her true passion for teaching upon graduation. She has pursued training with such teachers as Doris Preucil, Alice Joy Lewis, Carol Dallinger, Vera McCoy-Sulentic, Nancy Jackson and Edmund Sprunger.

Kirby co-founded West County Strings (St. Louis) with her husband, Brad, in 2013 where they enjoy a thriving Suzuki program for violin and viola, after holding a position at the STL School of Music from 2008-2013. Her students hold leadership positions in the STL Youth Orchestra, and the Missouri All-State Orchestra. Kirby especially enjoys her time on faculty at summer Suzuki Institutes an Chamber Music Camps. She is a recurring featured soloist for the Town and Country Symphony, St. Charles Symphony, Kankakee Valley Symphony.

88+ Ideas for Your Studio (more than the keys on a piano!)

Every summer, at every institute, teachers from all instrument backgrounds and experience levels have the opportunity to gather at an SAA Focus Group meeting. At these vibrant, collaborative meetings, current questions and ideas are discussed. The SAA board and staff appreciate receiving the ideas and suggestions from all who attend these summer focus meetings. You are sure to find many of these ideas—whether new or recycled—both interesting and helpful. By no means is this an exhaustive list of solutions to these studio challenges, but we hope that you will feel supported and inspired by seeing what is working in other teachers' studios.

Plan now to attend an institute in 2017, and be sure to lend your voice to the discussions at the Institute Focus Group meeting!

What are some challenges you find that are unique to a Suzuki music studio, and what solutions seem to be working well?

A. Strategies for ensuring Group Class attendance

- Explain to parents the development of ensemble skills in group.
- Give more parent education about children learning from each other.
- Assign every parent a job.
- Schedule social mingling time.
- Give incentives. Provide snacks.
- Track attendance with a sign-in sheet.
- Put a parent in charge of attendance. Follow up with each student who didn't attend .
- Build into the program the expectation that group is mandatory.
- Require pre-payment for groups.
- Announce a few weeks before class the a list of pieces to prepare for an upcoming concert.
- Assign specific homework to bring to group.
- Go over everything that happened in group at the private lesson, so they know it was important.
- Combine with another studio to increase numbers in each age group.
- Observe a teacher experienced in leading dynamic classrooms to build your group teaching confidence.
- Create community when students are young to support older group class attendance.
- Form same-instrument ensembles for younger students.
- Form cross-instrument chamber groups for older students.
- Group students by age instead of by book level (adjust time and level accordingly).
- Organize class field trips for older students.
- Reach outside the repertoire for exciting music for more advanced students.
- Instill the sense in older students that it is their role to come to class to "give back."

B. Review

- Start with review in home practice and in lessons.
- Set expectation of review during lesson.
- Establish a clear, specific, technical purpose of review.
- Clarify with parents and students that review is not regression, but progress.
- Preview techniques in new pieces by reviewing the techniques in old pieces.
- Hold a fall Halloween concert for review.
- Host an "oldies" concert.
- Choose review with cards, popsicle sticks, or dice.
- Involve kids in choosing their own pieces to review.
- Set a specific amount of time for review.
- Put a review chart online.
- Play a detective game: how do we make this review piece better?
- Pretend the student is the teacher—Have the student explain the points of the piece.
- Challenge students to polish pieces 2, 3, or even 8 books before their current piece.
- Choose a strong "dessert" piece to end the lesson with strength and confidence.

C. Parent Education & Involvement

- Start with lots of observation.
- Encourage reading *Nurtured by Love*.
- Communicate frequently.

- Feature parent information on studio website so that it will is always be available.
- Design a chart for parents to write on so they can follow a format.
- Create a "ready" list of specific skills that will help parents understand when children are ready to move on.
- Communicate frequently about being process driven not goal driven.
- Create a parent conference within studio to discuss issues and solutions.
- Encourage institute involvement.
- Utilize SAA's Parents as Partners Online.

D. Creating a strong Pre-Twinkle start

- Attend recitals, group class, and lessons to observe students' technique and the patterns of interaction between teacher and student.
- Build a culture of listening at home.
- Give lots of parent communication before the start of lessons to prepare for a gentle and slow beginning.
- Encourage videoing of lesson to supplement note-taking and to allow parents to be more present during the lesson.
- Suggest that parents learn from the beginning on a full-size instrument.
- Create posture games, and give parent a game list.
- Capitalize on SAA website information about Suzuki teaching.
- Overlap lessons to encourage community and a sense of pride to play in front of another student.

E. Regular Practice

- Create practice charts.
- 100 "wow's" on one practice technique gets a prize.
- Implement recognition of practice accomplishments.
- Sponsor a whole studio 100-day challenge.
- Emphasize daily deliberate practice.
- Add paper to a practice chain each day of practice.
- Check in daily with teacher by text, email, etc. (helpful for independent teens).
- Include a lesson on how to practice for parent and student.
- Together create a practice contract/understanding/goal setting at the start of the year.

F. Listening:

- Hold a 30-day listening party.
- Attach listening to a daily activity or habit.
- Talk with older students about the "why" and the possibilities that can come from listening.
- Ask families to create a culture of classical music.
- Give recommended listening lists to explore repertoire beyond Suzuki when ready.
- Emphasize that listening also has benefits for adults.
- Check for internalization of music by asking students to clap and sing a piece before they play it.

What is your studio doing to bring Suzuki education to a higher level of recognition and understanding within your community?

- Participating in cross-discipline festivals
- Being involved with other music associations
- Starting programs in schools, locally and internationally
- Hosting a Suzuki education class
- Traveling and performing internationally in concert halls
- Showcasing younger children in public concerts to increase awareness of the benefits of starting early
- Promoting participation in school orchestras
- Wearing institute t-shirts
- Encouraging solos at public performances to show that the individual is just as strong as the whole group
- Publishing stories and events in local paper
- Holding local Suzuki concerts on Suzuki birthday week

Within your community, what aspects of Suzuki education are recognized and understood when you or your students appear in public?

- Good posture
- Clear intonation
- Beautiful tone
- Ensemble skills
- Stage presence
- Memorization
- Concentration
- Young age of students
- Deportment
- Parent presence

4th International Vive la Musica Suzuki Festival

The Power of Music Education

By Leslie Mizrahi

When I started organizing the 4th International Vive la Musica Suzuki Festival I thought about one thing: In Mexico there is a great necessity for a better quality of education with more opportunities for more people, especially regarding musical education, where there is so much to be done.

It seems quite obvious to me that an education of a better quality is a direct consequence of well-prepared and trained teachers. It is us who can plant the seed of excellence in the students with love and respect, taking into account their individual needs. Every child can learn to play a musical instrument and everyone should have the right to enjoy the ample benefits of high quality music education. I'm convinced that adding together the work and effort of all of us, we will expand our scope and reach more states of the Mexican Republic and more and more children, thus promoting a significant change in education in our country.

Following that compass, we set out to create the best possible conditions for teacher training in different instruments, putting special emphasis in the selection of some of the most internationally-renowned Suzuki teacher trainers, aiming for a high-level learning experience in the art of teaching. In addition to the eleven Suzuki training courses, there was a Kodaly training course, an excellent complement to the trainees' education.

For music students we provided a space for growth and motivation where everyone learned and enjoyed a rich musical and social experience, with the special feeling of being part of this community. Some orchestras and musical ensembles, as well as piano students coming from different Suzuki schools and studios throughout the country, had the chance to play and inspire us all with beautiful music in concerts and recitals.

The festival took place from April 27 to May 8, 2016, at the Universidad Panamericana, campus Santa Fe, and the Novotel hotel of Mexico City Santa Fe, located next to the university. A special closing event was held at the Santa Fe's JW Marriot, only a few steps from Novotel.

A massive attendance exceeded our expectations—105 teachers coming from Brazil, Paraguay, Guatemala, and at least twelve states of the Mexican Republic took the training in a variety of courses, some of them as beginners and others moving ahead to new levels of training. We had also 250 music students, with ages ranging from three months to 18 years old, who came from different cities in the country to take individual masterclasses in various instruments as well as Kodaly and choir practice; the younger children participated in group lessons in the Suzuki Early Childhood Education courses.

The faculty was integrated by a fantastic group of trainers who motivated us with their knowledge and great enthusiasm. I'm so grateful to all of them for putting aside their busy schedules to come to Mexico and for constantly supporting the Mexican Suzuki Association programs. Caroline Fraser (Peru), Suzuki Philosophy, Piano Books One and Four; Nancy Lokken (US), Violin Book Two; MaryLou Roberts (US), Guitar Book Two; Carey Cheney (US), Cello Book One; Kelly Williamson (Canada), Flute Book One; Flor Canelo

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Festival Faculty

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Vive la Musica, continued from p. 64

Suzuki-Ollin guitars, directed by Joaquin Olivares and Victor Gardoqui

(Peru), Piano Book Three; Maria Luisa Labarthe (Peru), Suzuki Early Childhood Education levels One and Two; Lydia Mills (Chile), Kodaly Level One; Ernesto García "Tato" Velasco (Mexico), choir for all participants; Lidia Blanco (Costa Rica), Gabriel Pliego (Mexico), and Laura Jauregui (US and Mexico), violin masterclasses; Naomi Kusano (US), piano master classes.

Artists, teachers, and students filled the festival with music at every moment. The Mexican Suzuki Voice teacher Eugenia Ramirez offered a beautiful recital as part of the inauguration event and welcome cocktail. I congratulate and thank her, as well as the orchestras and ensembles that performed during the 12 days of the festival, such as Ensamble de guitarras Suzuki-Ollin of Mexico City, directed by Joaquín Olivares and Victor Gardoqui; Orquesta Moderna del Instituto Dante, from Cordoba, Veracruz, and its musical director Dante Santos; Orquesta del Centro de Iniciación Musical Ahuehuetes and their directors Aimé Mendoza and Elías Flores; the piano and violin soloists from Instituto Suzuki Vive la Música and their teachers, Carlos Ramirez and Leslie Mizrahi. A very special thanks to Pamela Bonilla for the piano accompaniments.

More than 60 piano students played on the general recital that was held the last morning of the Festival. The Instituto Vive la Música presented two pianists, ten-year-old Maria Hanneman, who played a piece from Book Six, and three-year-old Isabel Itzkowich, playing a Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star variation, representing with both performances the path of the Suzuki piano student, from the first steps to an advanced level. Both girls took masterclasses with Caroline Fraser and proudly played the grand concert piano at the closing event.

A testament to the reach of musical education through the socioeconomic spectrum was the presentation of two wonderful orchestras: the Orquesta Cedros-UP, conducted by Gabriel Pliego, and the Orquesta Mabela, a guest orchestra from a very poor area of the city, which offered a beautiful and moving performance under the baton of Venezuelan conductor Luis Ibarra.

Welcoming Nancy Lokken

The whole event closed with a touching expression of integration and universality through music as a great choir, formed by all the music students who participated in the festival and conducted by the choir teacher Ernesto "Tato" Garcia, sang together five beautiful pieces they learned during the four days of children's courses, including the song "Wishing" by Shinichi Suzuki and a song from the film The Choir Singers (Les Choristes). It was a breathtaking performance that brought an audience of 600 people to tears.

I wish to thank our sponsors for their generous support, which allowed us to grant partial scholarships to many teachers and students, as well as free meals for many participants, especially those who made a great effort to come from other countries and other Mexican cities.

One of our greatest satisfactions was to be able to grant full scholarships to three teachers coming from Guatemala, where they offer a music education program to a very poor community of their country, walking two hours from their homes every day to teach music to 200 children. The experience became a lovely cultural exchange when the teachers presented me with a fine handmade table cloth, crafted by them. A gift and a moment that made me remember in a special way the very essence of our festival.

So many miracles occurred as many hands came together to help and contribute in different ways, starting with the amazing staff: Diamari, Edgar, Doris, and Elias, who joined Gladys and me as volunteers, giving their time with passion. Vive la Musica's families and friends also lent their time and talents for the organization and production of the event: Claudia Hanneman and her ad firm was in charge of design and marketing; translators Karla Keren, Emil Russ, Itzia Mora and Mariana Braun rendered their services with no charge. José Raygadas provided 13 new pianos for our use, including the concert piano for the recitals and the closing event. Parents also helped in every way they could—the Itzkowich family, Sylvie Troillet, and Alejandra Robles—I cannot thank them enough.

I'm deeply grateful to the Universidad Panamericana, for lending us their facilities so generously. It was a privilege for all of us to have such an extraordinary main venue. Many thanks to Gabriel Pliego and Caroline Fraser for their wonderful words of praise and encouragement, for the support and teachings. Also to the SAA for their exceptional support to bring some of the teacher

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Suzuki Serendipity®

A Memorial Tribute to Miss Sheila Keats

By Caroline S. Clauss-Ehlers and Linda Kahn, with Alexander Yudkovsky

On February 12, 2016, we interviewed Miss Sheila Keats, pianist and cofounder of The School for Strings, about her life in music—Suzuki style. Because Miss Keats was known as a luminary in the field who dedicated her life to a love of music, children, and beautiful performances, we wanted to ensure that future generations would learn from her experiences. Talking with Miss Keats in her apartment that Friday afternoon, we had no way of knowing how critical it was to have the conversation. On March 8, just 25 days later, Miss Keats passed. This article is a tribute to her life in music. We are grateful to be able to preserve her legacy in this way.

Six key themes emerged from our interview with Miss Keats: her lifelong commitment to music and music education, Suzuki style; her innovative idea for maintaining a cultural appreciation of classical music; her strong advocacy for children; her focus on parent involvement through the Suzuki method; her perspective on music as a way to promote independent thinking and thinkers; and her encouragement of allowing for mistakes and choices.

She had a vision for her students—that they could spend their time committing to something larger than themselves.

A lifelong commitment to music and music education, Suzuki style. Miss Keats took us back to her early life in music and the serendipitous events that influenced her career. "Getting involved in music education was very simple. Teaching is what young pianists do who are not aspiring to a career as one of the top touring soloists. I started teaching not long after I graduated from Juilliard. I had a few private students. I also had a job at Juilliard, so that paid the rent, but I kept my hand in performance and music making by doing some teaching. It's what all young pianists did and still do. So, again, there was nothing particularly unusual about that."

True to Miss Keats, this was only the beginning of her story—the Suzuki part was yet to come. "Now, how I became involved in the Suzuki method is something else again. And that was serendipity. I told you that I was a friend of [violinist] Louise Behrend for many years before she got involved in the Suzuki affair. I went about my business and she went about hers, but we exchanged gossip about what each of us was doing and we accompanied each other to the other one's interests. So when Suzuki came to this country with a group of children who performed at a convention, I think it was the Music Teachers National Association in Philadelphia, Juilliard invited him to come and do a presentation there as long as he was so close. I went with her to listen to the presentation. When it was all over (and these little children were really something special) . . . when it was all over she looked at me and she said, 'You know, I'm a pretty good teacher of children, but this man is doing a much better job. I want to find out more about it.' That was in 1964."

Miss Keats shared how Miss Behrend, founder/director of The School for Strings, was influenced by Suzuki and sought more information about his method and approach. "The next summer she did a Far Eastern tour that I helped arrange. She had been invited to play with the Manila Symphony and her tour ended with a two week stint in Japan that was arranged by an ex-student of hers who was a teaching nun." Near the end of this tour, Miss Behrend spent a week or two observing Dr. Suzuki teach. "She watched lessons all day long and at the end of the day they had a discussion. Why was he doing this? How did he arrive at that conclusion? They talked about it in detail." Miss Behrend started to experiment with his method of instruction upon her return to the US, calling it the Suzuki program. The program grew and by the second year, there were requests from 50 families.

The serendipitous nature of Miss Keats' involvement in adapting the Suzuki approach for US students showed us how sometimes life can just happen, pointing us in a direction that we are meant to follow, even if it wasn't a path previously recognized. At the time, she was supplementing her teaching income as a freelance book editor. "I went away with [Miss Behrend] for two summers, and the second summer was the one before [the Suzuki program's] second year. That was the summer I lost my best freelance client. It was not only the best client but it was the best paying. There I was in the kitchen with 15 children and wondering, 'What am I going to do next year?' When I told Louise about it she said, 'You know, we need somebody to help run this program. We can't teach and run it. We don't have time. Would you like to run the program for us?' So I said, 'Sure.' That's how I got involved, which had nothing to do with saving the world, a great deal to do with giving me a little bit of income. So as I say, it was serendipity. I lost a client at just the time she needed somebody. And then, of course, I got more and more involved."

An innovative idea for maintaining a cultural appreciation of classical music. Miss Keats' participation in what turned into The School for Strings grew into a lifetime commitment to honor music and make it accessible. She had a vision for her students—that they could spend their time committing to something larger

® Title suggested by Miss Keats

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Keats, continued from p. 65

than themselves. Miss Keats also had a vision for society—that people could be thoughtful consumers of what they hear aiming to listen to quality sounds rather than settle for those presented. She even envisioned a campaign: Equal Time for Beethoven. "... Every place you go you hear music, including on the telephone where they play music endlessly while you're on hold, and it's usually garbage. My idea is that you substitute some classical music for what they're currently playing in the grocery store, in the bank. I don't know about department stores. I haven't been in one recently. The listener is trapped. He doesn't know any better and he doesn't choose it, so he'll listen to anything they give him. That's why I say Equal Time for Beethoven—but so far nobody has picked it up."

A strong advocate for children. Miss Keats' plans for her students extended far beyond their piano instruction. "The teacher who is a maverick, like me, is thinking about what happens in the future. In other words, I'm starting at the end. So where do I hope to bring these children and what do I hope they're going to do once they've graduated The School for Strings, once they've gone off to college, once they've gotten involved in real life?"

A focus on parent involvement through the Suzuki method. One of the keys to Suzuki success is parent involvement, though as Miss Keats explained, parent involvement typically meant something very different in Japan than in the US. "The mother of the family is totally responsible for her child's education, and she takes this very seriously. If her child is sick she will go to school and sit at his desk and she'll take notes on everything that's being taught that day. She goes home and she tutors the child until he's well enough to go to school again so that he never gets behind. So the idea of the mother being involved in the child's music education was perfectly normal to these Japanese mothers." By contrast, "In this country, traditionally parents have figured the teacher is supposed to teach the children. The mother mothers them and the teacher teaches them."

Without thinking through why we do what we do—and just following instructions—we can find ourselves making careless choices about leadership. If you have a whole country that just follows what it's told to do that's dangerous. A whole country starts with individual people.

Early on, Miss Behrend realized that her students' mothers (as the parent partners were all mothers at the time) felt intimidated by the prospect of being the home teacher. She started a parent class to support parents in this endeavor. The parent class ran the entire first year of the child's instruction and encouraged parents to learn the basics of their child's chosen instrument. "One after another, the mothers began coming into the office looking for [Miss Behrend] to thank her. They said to her, 'We signed up because we thought this would be so good for our children, but we were scared because we don't know how to play the violin. We didn't know how we were going to manage!'"

Beyond providing basic competency, the class enabled parents to empathize with their children's struggles and through that empathy, develop patience and compassion. "We still don't turn you out loose and say, 'Okay folks, now you know all about it. Go ahead and teach your child!' But at least we give you some idea of what we want the child to do and we give you some idea of how the child feels by asking you to play the way he's playing." The parent class was an integral part of The School for Strings piano program from its inception, and until her death, Miss Keats was its exclusive instructor, in later years hosting it in her plant-filled apartment.

A view of music as a way to promote independent thinking and thinkers. Despite Miss Keats' emphasis on parental involvement in their children's music education, a primary goal was to cultivate children's independence—both as musicians and as citizens of the world. "It can be difficult with some children who are very dependent and who don't want to be weaned, who don't want to be left on their own," she explained, "but they still have to be guided, because otherwise they're in trouble. . . If you take it even further, the world could be in trouble. Without thinking through why we do what we do—and just following instructions—we can find ourselves making careless choices about leadership. If you have a whole country that just follows what it's told to do that's dangerous. A whole country starts with individual people."

Miss Keats' own fierce sense of independence stemmed from her childhood in Binghamton, New York. "My mother was convinced that all children should be independent and able to take care of themselves by the age of four. . . My father never answered a factual question. If you asked him how he was, he would tell you. But if I said to him, 'What time is it?' he taught

Sheila with her student, Emma Huang.

Louise Behrend, Sheila Keats, Constance Starr

me how to read a clock. Every question was answered by either, 'Let's look it up,' or 'Let's try it,' or 'Let's figure it out.'"

Miss Keats cultivated her students' self-sufficiency the same way. "I give them reasons why we're doing things... A simple example on the piano is that when they play the thumb, they have a tendency to go down on it. So I explain to them that when you're going very fast, if you take the time to go down and then back up you've added two motions that are interrupting the flow of the passage and you won't be able to play as fast as you want to. I don't just tell them, 'Don't go down on the thumb.' I give them reasons because I'm hoping the children are going to start applying what I've told them to do and going farther than that by themselves in their own thinking... I'm trying to prepare them for the day when they don't have a teacher and they want to learn a new piece. They should have some equipment for understanding how to learn it and for digging into the piece to find out what is it saying."

Courage to allow for mistakes and choices. An astute observer of human nature, Miss Keats noted many parents' ambivalence toward their children's growing independence and their natural urge to shield their children from misadventure. "You have to be brave enough to let the kid go his own way, even if you think it's wrong. Let him make his own mistakes. He'll learn. He'll find out. But it does take courage. There are a lot of parents who don't have the courage to let the child be himself." Nevertheless, she encouraged parents to loosen their grip. "It seems to me that a good parent is training his child or her child to think independently and not to keep coming home to mother. If your 35-year-old child is bringing laundry home to you still, there's something wrong with both of you, and if I were you I wouldn't take the laundry. I'd tell the kid to take it down the block." As in a good children's book that can be read on two levels, there was as much wisdom to be gained from Miss Keats' piano lessons by the parent as by the child.

What Miss Keats modestly described as "Suzuki serendipity" led her on a path of making quality music education accessible to children and families for more than five decades. Just as she instructed her students, Miss Keats' own life epitomized a commitment to taking risks to persevere. Her words and example encouraged young people to make mistakes and learn from them, intrinsically understanding that the lessons learned promote confidence and independence.

We remembered Miss Keats talking about how to practice at one of our own parent classes. She said how someone might practice the wrong notes, fingerings, or rhythm all week. The person has practiced—but they have learned the piece incorrectly. Now the person has to go back and practice again, to unlearn the mistakes made and relearn the correct way to play the piece. Miss Keats remains a role model for all of us, as she truly lived a life committed to good practice.

Caroline Clauss-Ehlers (CC) is a parent at the School for Strings whose 11 and 13 year old daughters play cello and piano, respectively. Her 8 month old son's future instrument remains undecided at the moment.

Linda Kahn lives with her husband and children in New York City. Her two daughters play violin and piano, and her son is a lapsed cellist.

Alexander Yudkovsky (Sasha) performed extensively as soloist and chamber musician throughout the United States and Europe. Since 1994, he has been serving as the executive director of The School for Strings in New York City.

In Memoriam: Sara Benites

Sara Benites was born in Trujillo, Perú, on June 30, 1949. She died on September 7, 2016. Sara earned degrees from universities in Trujillo, Peru, and Santiago, Chile. In March 1989, she arrived in Chile and began her work with the Suzuki method at Chilean Eagles and Santiago College, where she worked for more than 27 years.

She was a founder of Los Niños Violinista del Perú (The Violin Children of Perú). She was one of the founders of the Suzuki Association of Chile, training hundreds of students with Suzuki method. She has been a guest teacher in Argentina, México, USA and Brazil.

Sara Benites, defines her studio, Escuela de Música Shinichi Suzuki: "Twenty-two years ago I began a school that for itself has been defined as a school where children began developing their talents without knowing that they had that gift. Years have passed, I've seen many children grow with their violin under their arm, happy, confident, secure, and with self-esteem that with no doubt has helped them a lot on their life path."

Remembrances

I lived in Lima, Peru, from 1982–1984. During that time, Caroline Fraser and I introduced the Suzuki method to Peru. After a few months, I started a weekly pedagogy class for six interested music teachers. Two teachers from Trujillo had heard about the Suzuki method and traveled by bus overnight for eight hours to attend the Friday class in Lima, returning that night to teach in Trujillo on Saturday! We covered six violin units in those two years, and those six teachers became active leaders in their countries. In January of 1983, we had the first Suzuki Festival in Peru, first in Trujillo and then the following week in Lima. When I moved to Santiago, Chile in 1986, Sara was looking for another job, and I suggested she apply for a position at Santiago College, a private Pre-K–12 grade school in Santiago. She won the position and taught there until she passed away. I will always remember Sara's winning smile and positive, enthusiastic teaching style. I heard many of her students at Festivals and they were always so well prepared and loved their teacher and their music.

–Marilyn O'Boyle

Sarita,

How to say goodbye… How to accept your departure…

Remembering all of our Suzuki adventures, everything we lived through together back in the nineties. I remember when we stayed up all night working to develop the International Suzuki Festivals.

I feel so sad. We always had the idea of visiting each another, but then the work that we deeply love left us little space or time, and we shared this centimeter by centimeter with our little ones.

Oh Sarita, I always, always admired you for your humanity, always so cheerful, so friendly, with a sublime wisdom;, a master. I think so far I have not met anyone like that, always so optimistic, and with a very special sense of humor.

Our dress rehearsals with students, with your tempo indications, were almost a spiritual experience for me, your piano accompanist. There were so many conversations and opportunities to work with you because of the Suzuki Association of Chile. You were a fundamental part of the development of the Suzuki method in Chile.

We will miss you. Farewell dear friend.

–Blancamaría Montecinos

PHOTO BY ISYLM

Vive la Musica, continued from p. 66

trainers and for being always available to advise and guide us in the best possible way.

To conclude, I want to share one of my favorite memories of the festival. One day, 70 teachers were invited to eat lunch together. Suddenly, a flute player started to play and everyone clapped and cheered. The next day the guitarists brought their instruments and also played, and from then on, our meals turned into unforgettable spontaneous reunions with music, laughter, and a sense of community.

Altogether the 4th International Vive la Musica Suzuki Festival was a powerful experience, full of emotion, fun and learning, a beautiful opportunity to give and receive, to keep growing and mutually enriching our lives. This way we want our teachers to have more and better professional and emotional tools to offer their students a musical education of the best quality, based on respect and love, guiding them through the path of becoming better human beings through music.

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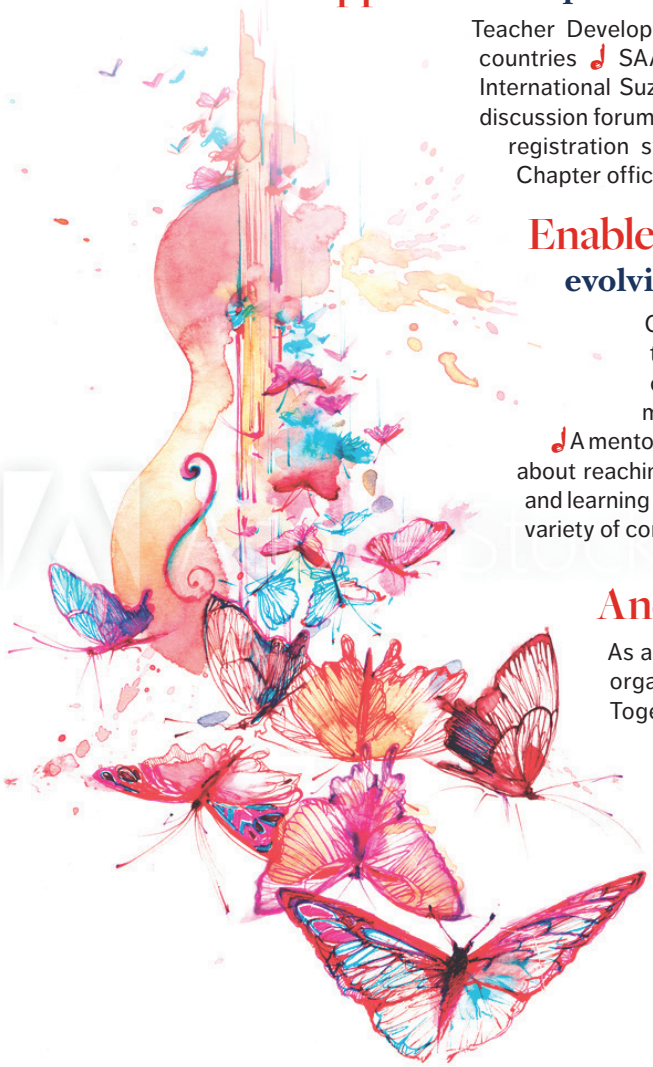

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