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

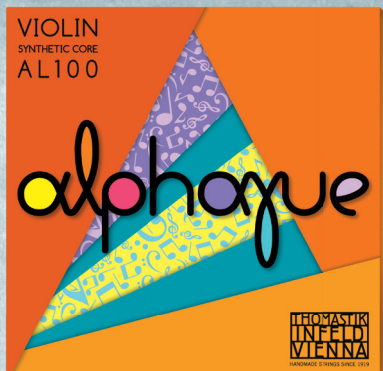
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The Suzuki Association of the Americas aspires to improve the quality of life in the Americas through Suzuki education. We seek to create a learning community which embraces excellence and nurtures the human spirit.

Photos by SAA Staff



Cover image:

Scenes from the 2016 SAA Conference. See 2018 Conference information, pp. 10–17.

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# Chair's Column

By Joan Krzywicki

Summer is often a time when we take a break from our usual routines and engage in activities that refresh our Suzuki spirit. Attending a Suzuki Institute is one way to do that. Whether we attend as a teacher, a workshop participant, a parent, or a student, an Institute stimulates us and reminds us why we are so deeply attached to the philosophy of Dr. Suzuki. These events change us to some extent. Perhaps we observe someone's teaching and gain new insights for how to work with students on a particular skill. Perhaps we bond with other teachers and/or parents in a way that makes us ever more dedicated to our Suzuki community. It is very likely that we will return home with noble hearts filled with love.

While teaching a Suzuki Piano Book One course this summer at the Virginia Suzuki Institute, I spent time every evening reading through observation notes that the class participants submitted to me that day. During the course, we had discussed the Suzuki philosophy at length, and we had reviewed several of the anecdotes in the books *Nurtured by Love and Ability Development from Age Zero* by Dr. Suzuki. One cannot read those books without pondering the concept of love. Dr. Suzuki wrote about his love of Mozart, his love of Tolstoy, and his love of children. Poring over the written observations, I was very moved to read the following statement from one of the participants:

*If I keep looking at a little child's attempts at beautiful music like those of one learning to speak, I find my heart actually feeling a little of the love that Dr. Suzuki so much tried to communicate.*

Since returning home, I frequently revisit this statement in my mind. I have realized that each time I am working with a student and helping him or

her make music, I am really trying to help that student learn to communicate various emotions, including love, with the language of music. Even very young children can experience the joy of making someone else happy with music. Music can heal, it can comfort, it can excite us, and it can connect us to all of humanity, past and present.

As your new Chair of the SAA Board of Directors, I challenge all of you to spend time yourselves contemplating not just the "how" of Suzuki teaching but the "why" as well. And then please ponder the importance of bringing our Suzuki education to all of the children of the world. Dr. Suzuki himself worked toward this goal every day of his life. Take time to ask yourselves what you can do to support this long-term vision, starting with each community in the Americas. Please stay connected to the SAA and to your local chapters. Please encourage others in your communities to join us or renew their memberships. We all need to be involved in dialogue with others, expressing our opinions and our ideas. We need to be prepared to explain and promote our beautiful philosophy to others. And realizing that our annual dues do not cover the costs of making these dreams come true, please make a personal pledge to support the SAA in whatever amount you can.

Be assured that every one of you is important in carrying out our SAA goals. I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible in the next two years. I welcome hearing about your own visions and thoughts. Let us join together with much hope for the future of the children of the Americas—and perhaps the world.

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Preferred by Suzuki flute teachers worldwide, Jupiter flutes are crafted by KHS Musical Instruments, also the makers of Azumi intermediate and Altus professional handmade flutes and headjoints.



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Email: sharserv@sharmusic.com • Web: sharmusic.com

Since 1962, Shar has offered a complete line of violins, violas, cellos and basses for students through professionals, as well as all accessories and a full line of Suzuki Method materials.

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Manufacturers of musical strings and accessories for bowed instruments. There is a Super-Sensitive brand string for every player at every level. Brands include Red Label, America's Best Selling Student String, Stellar, Sensicore, Supreme and Pinnacle.



## Resources for Teachers & Parents

### Everything Depends on How We Raise Them— Educating Young Children by the Suzuki Method

by Shigeki Tanaka

Translated by Kyoko Selden, 114 pages.

US/CAN \$14.99

### First Class Tips for Suzuki Parents

A collection of the best American Suzuki Journal articles for parents from the past 20+ years.

ISBN 978-1-943233-04-5

US/CAN \$10

### Focus on Suzuki Piano

by Mary Craig Powell

Ideas and techniques for parents and teachers, compiled from articles that first appeared in Suzuki World magazine between 1982 and 1987.

US/CAN \$12.95

### Group Lessons for Suzuki Violin and Viola

by Carolyn McCall

Group lesson ideas for violin and viola, organized by book level and technique/skill.

US/CAN \$14.99

### Helping Parents Practice by Edmund Sprunger

*Helping Parents Practice: Ideas for Making it Easier* is a response to the most common concerns of parents who practice a musical instrument with their children.

US/CAN \$20

### The Life and Letters of Frederic Chopin

by Malgosia Lis

Four-part series on Chopin by Malgosia Lis, which features original translations of Chopin's letters by the author and was originally published in the American Suzuki Journal. Now conveniently bound together in a single volume. The 41-page book is spiral bound and includes photos.

ISBN #: 978-1-943233-05-2

US/CAN \$12

### Nurtured by Love:

*The Life and Work of Shinichi Suzuki*

Narrated by actor Noriyuki "Pat" Morita, *Nurtured by Love* is an intimate journey through the life of one of the world's most influential music educators, Dr. Shinichi Suzuki. Winner of Gold World Medal and National Telly Award. DVD (with Japanese Subtitles)

US/CAN \$34

### Violin Lessons!! Storybook

by Katrin St. Clair, Illustrated by Cy St. Clair

Follow a young student as he and his mother begin taking private violin lessons. Perfect to help children and their parents learn what to expect as they begin their music studies.

ISBN #: 978-1-943233-00-7

US/CAN \$8.50

### Summer Institute

by Katrin St. Clair, Illustrated by Cy St. Clair

At their teacher's suggestion, violin student Jim and his dad set out for a summer adventure—Institute! Together they learn what Suzuki Summer Institutes are all about: having fun while learning and sharing music with new friends. Companion book to *Violin Lessons!!*

ISBN #: 978-1-943233-03-8

US/CAN \$7.50

### Suzuki Achievement/Graduation Certificates (minimum 3)

US/CAN \$7/each

### Teaching with an Open Heart

by Edward Kreitman

A guide to developing conscious musicianship for Suzuki parents, teachers, and students.

US/CAN \$19.95

### The Vehicle of Music by Dr. Masaaki Honda

Filled with personal anecdotes and interesting stories, this book offers insights into Dr. Suzuki's philosophy as well as inspirational advice on handling life's challenges.

US/CAN \$24.99

### To Learn with Love

by William and Constance Starr

Practice, motivation, learning, nutrition, competition and family lifestyles are a few of the topics discussed by these experienced teachers, performers, and parents.

US/CAN \$16.95

### The Violin Column by Dr. Milton Goldberg

A collection of articles by Dr. Milton Goldberg for both teachers and parents focusing on care of the violin, practicing, technique, and motivation. Articles previously published in *Talent Education News* and the *American Suzuki Journal* 1969 through 1982.

US/CAN \$8

### Winning Ways

Sequel to *First Class Tips*. New resource for parents and teachers.

ISBN #: 978-1-943233-06-9

US/CAN \$12

### Young Children's Talent Education and Its Method

A collection of essays written by Dr. Shinichi Suzuki. Topics include "How to Foster Ability," "The Power of Habit," "Memory and Absorption" and "Educational Systems." Translated by Kyoko Selden. 72 pages.

US/CAN \$21.95

## Fun Ways to Practice

### Bunny Ballads

by Kathleen Spring

Pre-Twinkle pieces for young violin students.

US/CAN \$20

### I Know a Fox With Dirty Socks

by William Starr

Short and easy songs for beginners, keeping learning motivational with fun lyrics set to familiar tunes. Available for violin, viola and cello.

US/CAN \$6.95

### Math Fun

by Andy J. Felt & George Kung

Developing math skills is fun with this two-part book is filled with activities for Suzuki parents to enjoy with their kids, ages 3-7. Includes a game board your child can personalize.

ISBN#: 978-1-943233-01-4

US/CAN \$15.50

### 101 Japanese Children's Songs

by Yoko Abe

A collection of 101 Japanese children's songs which were mostly composed from 1884 to 1921. This delightful collection has been compiled to improve note reading and sight reading skills for young students.

ISBN #: 978-1-943233-02-1

US/CAN \$16

### Reading between the Lines: Building Music Readers with Musicianship Skills

by Gail Yaffe

**1: Elementary Violin** Solidify the relationship between learning to play music by ear and learning to read music at sight.

US/CAN \$24

**2: Intermediate Violin** This book transforms scale routines into a series of musical brain teasers.

US/CAN \$20

### Technique Mastery for Violin

by Joseph Kaminsky

**Volume 1** 20-page book and compact disc include all two-octave major and minor scales, tuning pitches, vibrato development, rhythms, finger dexterity exercises and more. Useful for Suzuki students in Books 1-3 and up.

**Volume 2** 14-page book and 2 compact discs contain all three-octave major and melodic minor scales, three octave major arpeggios, string crossing and finger dexterity exercises, vibrato exercises in six positions and more. Useful for Suzuki students in Books 4 and up.

**Volume 3** 16-page book and compact disc contain many shifting, dexterity and warm-up exercises for advanced violin students in Suzuki Books 6 and up.

US/CAN \$15.99 each

### Which Pitch Is Which? Interactive Learning Program

by Mary Kay Waddington and Phala Tracy

*Which Pitch Is Which?* takes students on a musical adventure that brings pitches to life! Interactive CD ROM includes ways to practice recognizing the pitches. Includes several sets of flashcards. All ages from preschool to adult will find this an easy, exciting way to learn to read pitches.

US/CAN \$42

### Which Pitch? Reader

by Mary Kay Waddington with Phala Tracy

A Reading Primer for Treble and Bass clefs including CD's of duets for every piece!

US/CAN \$13.95

## Books by Dr. Shinichi Suzuki

### Nurtured by Love

Translated by Waltraud Suzuki.

*Nurtured by Love* is a collection of Dr. Suzuki's thoughts on the ideas that guided his life and work.

US/CAN \$13.95

### Nurtured by Love: Revised Edition with New Translation

Now in a new translation, this book is Shin'ichi Suzuki's exploration of the concepts of his Talent Education philosophy through a personal narrative of discovery and experiences.

US/CAN \$13.99

### Ability Development from Age Zero

Translated by Mary Louise Nagata.

A companion book to *Nurtured by Love*. The focus of this book is on the parent and child.

US/CAN \$14.95 each

## Spanish Titles

### Desarrollo de las habilidades desde la edad cero

Through simple language and antidotes, Dr. Shinichi Suzuki explains the fundamentals of the world-renowned Suzuki Method.

US/CAN \$15.50

### Inspirando niños

Translated by Adán Aguilar Esquivel.

Spanish version of *First Class Tips for Suzuki Parents*.

US/CAN \$13

### Educados con Amor

Traducción al español de *Nurtured by Love*.

US/CAN \$13



# Organizational News

## Scenes from the Leadership Retreat 2017



Deer Creek Lodge and Conference Center

Photo courtesy [www.deercreekstateparklodge.com](http://www.deercreekstateparklodge.com)



Dorothy and Don Jones



Early Childhood teachers



Presentation of Certificates of Achievement



Gail Lange with Dorothy Jones



Certificate recipient



SECE baby and toddler demonstration class



SECE teacher social at the retreat event



Cello and Guitar Teacher Trainers



Piano Participants



### Upcoming SPA Courses

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

#### September 2017

<b>Studio of Jill Whitman</b> <i>Sep 23-24, 2017</i>	Bellingham, WA <i>Trainer: Richard Mooney</i>
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#### November 2017

<b>Oregon Suzuki Association</b> <i>Nov 18-19, 2017</i>	Portland, OR <i>Trainer: Susan Baer</i>
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#### January 2018

<b>Studio of Timothy Angel</b> <i>Jan 6-7, 2018</i>	Lubbock, TX <i>Trainer: Pat D'Ercole</i>
<b>Suzuki Association of South Carolina</b> <i>Jan 6-7, 2018</i>	Columbia, SC <i>Trainer: Beth Cantrell</i>

### Calendar of Events 2017

<b>1st of each month</b>	Newsletter (Short Score) submissions due
<b>Sept. 1, Dec. 1, Mar. 1 and June 1</b>	ASJ Advertisement Contracts due
<b>Nov. 1, Feb. 1, May 1 and Aug. 1</b>	ASJ submissions due
<b>September 15-17</b>	Board meeting, Boulder, CO
<b>September 25</b>	Established Institutes – 2018 preliminary information due
<b>September 30</b>	Premier Business Member Renewals due
<b>October 15</b>	2018 Institute Applications due Parents as Partners 2017 closes Conference International Ensembles applications due
<b>October 25</b>	Applications for Conference masterclasses, orchestra and all other ensembles due
<b>October 30</b>	Conference session proposals due
<b>December 15</b>	Conference Piano Concerto applications due
<b>December 31</b>	Last day for 2017 charitable donations
<b>January 12-14, 2018</b>	SAA Board meeting, location tbd
<b>January 15, 2018</b>	Early Bird Conference Registration opens



# 18th Biennial SAA Conference

## *A Collaborating Community*

May 24–28, 2018

Hilton Minneapolis and Minneapolis Convention Center  
Minneapolis, MN

Sharing ideas and working together come naturally to musicians, especially those in the Suzuki community! The 2018 conference will be an opportunity to gather and share ideas with a focus on the ways in which teachers, parents, and students can work together in support of each other. The theme “A Collaborating Community” invites us to explore the many different forms collaboration can take, both within and outside the SAA community. Among teaching colleagues, collaborative projects can encourage a culture of peer-to-peer mentorship, in formal and informal settings. Parent involvement can spark enthusiasm along the path of a child’s growth. Musical collaboration in a student’s development is a crucial component in building life skills, along with its motivational power.

Some more questions to consider: In what ways do lessons and group classes support the development of cooperative musicians? How can teachers support one another in their work? How are strong bonds formed within studios among parents and students? As we look beyond our SAA community, how can teachers, parents, and students share and spark interest in Suzuki education through collaborative activities outside the Suzuki community? In the coming year, notice how collaborations support your Suzuki work, and come to the conference ready to hear new ideas for strengthening those connections!

### Student Opportunities

We invite SAA teachers to prepare students to audition for a variety of opportunities available to students at the 2018 Biennial SAA Conference in Minneapolis to energize, motivate, support, and fuel our conference theme, “A Collaborating Community.”

This year our students will have the chance to work with numerous guest clinicians, including the Montrose Trio, sponsored by Robertson Violin.

New this year are the Cello Choir and Viola Choir. Piano ensembles will feature ensemble piano performances of movements from the *Carnival of the Animals* by Camille Saint-Saëns. To highlight the importance of the upper Suzuki violin repertoire, a Suzuki Violin Book Seven/Eight demonstration group class is being planned with participants drawn from SYASE and other events.

**The full list of student events includes the following:**

- Instrumental and vocal masterclasses taught by guest clinicians in each instrument area
  - Chamber Group Masterclasses
  - Instrumental Ensembles that are formed especially for the conference: Cello, Bass and Viola Choirs, Flute Performing Ensemble, Piano Duos, Guitar Ensemble, Recorder Consort, and Violin Performing Ensemble
  - Piano concerto solo with faculty orchestra accompaniment
  - *Carnival of the Animals* piano ensemble performance
  - Two Suzuki Youth Orchestras of the Americas (SYOA 1 and 2)
  - Suzuki Young Artists String Ensemble (SYASE)
  - International Ensembles Concert featuring selected performing ensembles from throughout our region
- Students prepare an audition exemplifying mastery and ease of their piece. Students have a rare opportunity to rehearse, socialize, and perform with students from many different places. Teachers observe, learn and inspire each other, and parents support and celebrate their children’s hard work and progress—a true collaboration of our Suzuki community!



# Student Events

SAA conferences provide numerous events designed for selected Suzuki students from across the Americas. Conference student events offer unique observation experiences for participating teachers and great coaching and performing experiences for students. Students may apply to participate in instrument-specific masterclasses coached by distinguished

guest clinicians and/or they may apply to participate in coached ensembles. Student participation in any of the events is level-specific and audition-based.

- Instrumental, Voice, and Chamber Group Masterclasses
- Instrument-Specific Ensembles and Choirs
- Piano Concerto

- Piano (Carnival of the Animals) Ensemble
- Suzuki Youth Orchestras of the Americas (SYOA) 1 and 2
- Suzuki Young Artists String Ensemble (SYASE)
- International Ensembles Concert

## REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL APPLICANTS

### Criteria

Applicants must:

- Study with an SAA Active Teacher Member.
- Be high school age or younger, unless age limits are specified for the activity.
- Have a flexible schedule for May 24-27, 2018, as final event schedules may not be determined until February 2018.

### Application

- Where appropriate, accompaniment is required for all instruments for all auditions, except piano, guitar, harp, recorder and chamber music groups. Piano concerto requires second piano accompaniment. Memorization is required, except for chamber ensembles.
- Applicants should record their auditions with the best lighting and sound quality available. Attention should also be paid to attire.
- Where requested, applicant's teacher must provide a recommendation letter including information on reading and chamber music experience and any other information required.
- Separate application forms and fees must be submitted for **each** application, as required.
- All materials must be submitted online (to SAA website).
  - October 15: International Ensembles
  - October 25: Masterclasses, Viola, Bass Choir, Cello Choir, Recorder Consort, Violin Performing Ensemble, Guitar Ensemble, Flute Ensemble, SYOA, SYASE, and Chamber Music Ensembles

- December 15: Piano Concerto
- Keep a copy of the application and video for your records.
- Submit all materials and application fees online. [www.suzukiassociation.org/](http://www.suzukiassociation.org/)

### Fees

#### Application Fees:

- \$45 per student to apply for SYOA; SYASE; Masterclasses; Piano Concerto; Violin, Guitar, Piano (Carnival of the Animals) or Flute Performing Ensemble; Bass, Cello, Flute, or Viola Choir; and Recorder Consort
- \$75 for Chamber Music Groups (one fee per group)
- \$85 for International Ensembles Concert group applicants (one fee per group)

#### Participation Fees:

- (in addition to application fees if selected)
- \$130 for SYOA 1, SYOA 2, SYASE, Flute Performing Ensemble
  - \$75 for Violin or Guitar Ensemble; Recorder Consort; Cello, Bass, Flute, or Viola Choir; and Piano Ensemble (Carnival of the Animals)

### Selection Process

In addition to a high musical standard, the application review committees will consider a balance of ages, levels, instrumentation and geographic areas when prioritizing their results. Application materials will be reviewed carefully, and information will be held in confidence by committee members. Masterclass applicants for violin, viola, cello, bass, piano, flute, guitar, and recorder will also be considered for instrument-specific ensembles.

### If Selected

- Students must pay for own transportation, room, board, and any required fees.
- Students must be available for participation any time during the course of the conference weekend and during the days indicated for rehearsals and performances.
- In most cases, students will be selected to participate in no more than two activities due to scheduling constraints. SYOA participants are generally unavailable for participation in most other events.
- Student must be accompanied at all times by a parent or guardian while at the conference (signed release required).
- While students and their parents may be invited to attend specific sessions and performances, parents interested in attending other parts of the conference must pay the conference participant registration fee for the day or days attending.
- Student and parent or guardian must release to the SAA the rights to photograph and/or record sessions in which the student participates.
- It is the policy of the SAA that no personal video recording take place in any sessions, rehearsals, concerts or masterclasses. Please note the SAA employs a professional video company for recording selected events at the conference. Those recordings are generally made available to conference participants at a low cost.

# Student Events

## SPECIFIC AUDITION REQUIREMENTS

### INSTRUMENTAL, VOICE, AND CHAMBER GROUP MASTERCLASSES

Applicants accepted for a masterclass must perform the piece submitted on their application video, no exceptions.

#### Chamber Group Masterclass

Chamber Groups may include any recognized Suzuki instrument and must be three- to seven-member ensembles, with one person on a part.

Submit one movement from the standard chamber music repertoire, appropriate to the level of the group (beginning, intermediate or advanced). Less advanced groups should submit at least five minutes of appropriately selected early- and middle-level ensemble repertoire. Applicants accepted for a Chamber Groups selected must perform the piece submitted on their application video for the masterclass, with no exceptions.

#### Bass Masterclass

All levels welcome to apply. Submit current polished piece.



#### Cello Masterclass

Submit either:

- One piece in Suzuki Cello Book 8 or above.
- One piece or movement from beyond the Suzuki repertoire.

#### Flute Masterclass

Submit one piece from Suzuki Book 6 (or its equivalent) or above.

#### Guitar Masterclass

Submit one piece from Suzuki Book 3 or above.

#### Harp Masterclass

Submit one of the following

- Beginning Level: Submit one piece from Books 1-4.
- Intermediate and Advanced Level: Submit one piece from Book 4 or above.

#### Piano Masterclass

Students will be chosen from each of the following categories:

**Beyond the Suzuki repertoire:** Submit one piece/movement from beyond the Suzuki repertoire.

**Later Suzuki repertoire:** Submit one piece/movement from Books 5, 6, or 7, selected from the following list:

- J. S. Bach, Invention in C Major
- Haydn, Sonata in C Major, Hob. XVI/35
- Daquin, The Cuckoo
- Mendelssohn, Venetian Gondola Song, Op. 30, No. 6
- J. S. Bach, Invention in F Major
- Grieg, Notturmo, Op. 54, No. 4
- Chopin, Nocturne in c-sharp minor, Op. posth.
- Mozart, Sonata K.330 or K.331
- Granados, Spanish Dance No. 5
- Villa-Lobos, O Polichinello



- J. S. Bach, Prelude & Fugue in D Major, WTC I
- Debussy, La fille aux cheveux de lin
- Bartok, Romanian Folk Dances, Sz. 56

**Intermediate Suzuki Repertoire:** Submit one piece/movement from Books 3 or 4, selected from the following list:

- Clementi, Sonatina in C Major, Op. 36, No. 1, 1st movement
- Kuhlau, Sonatina in C Major, Op. 55
- Schumann, The Wild Rider
- Gurlitt, Little Waltz
- Clementi, Sonatina in C Major, Op. 36, No. 3, Spiritoso
- Bartok, Teasing Song
- Beethoven, Sonata in G Major, Op. 49, No. 2
- Tcherpnin, Bagatelle, Op. 5, No. 9
- J. S. Bach, Minuets I and II, from Partita in B-flat Major, BWV 825
- J. S. Bach, Gigue, from Partita in B-flat Major, BWV 825

**Early Suzuki Repertoire:** Submit Twinkle Theme and Variations **plus** one piece/movement, selected

# Student Events

from the following list of Book 1-2 repertoire:

- Chwatal, Little Playmates
- Dutton, Christmas-Day Secrets
- Suzuki, Allegro
- Anonymous, Minuet in G Major, from J.S. Bach's *Notebook for Anna Magdalena Bach*
- Bartok, Hungarian Folk Song
- Beethoven, Sonatina in G Major, Anh. 5
- Bartok, Children at Play

Piano students studying at Book 5 and beyond, for additional opportunities, please see the Piano Ensemble event, the Chamber Group Masterclass option, and the Concerto event.

## Recorder Masterclass

Open to all levels, including SAA-registered recorder teachers, as space allows. Submit most advanced polished

piece on each recorder size available. Suzuki repertoire is required for soprano and alto recorders.

## Viola Masterclass

Submit either:

- One piece in Suzuki Viola Book 7 or above.
- One piece or movement from beyond the Suzuki repertoire.

## Violin Masterclass

Submit either:

- One piece or movement from Mozart Concerto level or beyond.
- One piece from the SAA's Suggested Supplementary Repertoire for Violin Books 7-8.

*Note:* Violin students selected for the Violin Masterclass may also be considered for participation in a Violin Book 7/8

Demonstration Group Class. *No separate audition or fee is required.*

## Voice Masterclass

Audition pieces to be determined.



## INSTRUMENT-SPECIFIC ENSEMBLES

Students auditioning for an instrument-specific masterclass do not need to submit a separate audition or fee to be considered for participation in the ensemble for their instrument. Students meeting the criteria for the ensemble will indicate interest in participation as part of their application.

Students who are not applying for a masterclass, but wish to audition for an instrument-specific ensemble, must submit the same required audition material, audition fee and application and must provide any required teacher recommendations.

*Note:* If accepted, the student will be required to remit the participation fee for the event.

## Bass Choir

All levels welcome to apply. Submit current polished piece.

## Cello Choir

Submit either:

- One piece in Suzuki Cello Book 8 or above.
- One piece or movement from beyond the Suzuki repertoire.

## Flute Performing Ensemble

Submit one piece from Suzuki Book 3 (or its equivalent) and above. Students auditioning for the Flute Masterclass do not need to submit a separate audition piece or pay a separate application fee by most otherwise complete the application process.

## Flute Choir

Submit one piece from Suzuki Book 1 Fireflies and above. Music reading skills not necessary.

## Guitar Ensemble

Submit audition piece: Waltz from Sonata No. 9 by Paganini.

## Piano Ensemble

A special event for Piano students this year will feature an ensemble production of *Carnival of the Animals* by Camille Saint-Saëns. Each student selected will be assigned a part from the suite to play with a string ensemble, or a second piano, or other accompaniment.

Students at the Book 5 & beyond level who are not applying for masterclass may apply to participate in the Carnival production through the same process: by submitting a polished piece as their audition.

Applicants who want to be considered for a part in Carnival of the Animals should include a teacher recommendation to help give the committee a sense of the student's ensemble experience. Eight or more students will be selected based on their auditions and teacher recommendation and assigned a part to learn in advance. Coaching and rehearsal sessions will be required.



# Student Events

Students selected to perform in the Carnival event will need to be available from Thursday evening through Sunday for rehearsals and performances. An additional participation fee will be required.

## Recorder Consort

Submit most advanced polished piece on each recorder size available, with at least

one piece at the Suzuki Book 3 level and beyond (i.e. one piece on soprano; or one piece on soprano and one on alto; or one each on soprano, alto, and tenor; or one each on soprano, alto, tenor, and bass).

## Viola Ensemble

Submit either:

- One piece in Suzuki Viola Book 5 or above.

- One piece or movement from beyond the Suzuki repertoire.

## Violin Performing Ensemble

Students must be studying at the level of Book 9 or beyond.

Submit one piece or movement from Mozart Concerto level or beyond.

## ORCHESTRAS



## Suzuki Youth Orchestras of the Americas (SYOA)

Students must be available from the evening of May 24 through late afternoon on May 27, 2018.

**SYOA 1:** Students born on or after June 1, 2007, and studying at the following minimum levels:

- Violin: Book 5 and above
- Viola and Cello: Book 4 and above
- Bass: Book 2 and above (Students may be one year older.)

### Audition pieces for SYOA 1:

- Violin: Vivaldi Concerto in a minor, 3rd movement
- Viola: Bach Bourree
- Cello: Humoresque
- Bass: Bach Minuet 1 or beyond (Must have studied at least eighteen months.)

**SYOA 2:** Students born on or after Jan. 1, 2006, and on or before December 31, 2007, and studying at the following minimum levels:

- Violin: Book 7 and above
- Viola and Cello: Book 5 and above
- Bass: Book 3 and above (Students may be one year older.)

### Audition pieces for SYOA 2:

- Violin: Fiocco Allegro
- Viola: Telemann Concerto in GM, 2nd movement
- Cello: Breval Sonata, 2nd movement
- Bass: Saint Saens "The Elephant"

## Suzuki Young Artists String Ensemble (SYASE)

Activities tentatively scheduled from the evening of May 24 through the evening of May 27. Students born on or after January 1, 2002, and on or before December 31, 2005, and studying at the following minimum levels:

- Violin: Book 8 and above
- Viola: Book 6 and above
- Cello: Book 7 and above
- Bass: Book 5 and above (Note: Bass students may be one year older.)

### Audition pieces for SYASE:

- Violin: Bach a minor Concerto, 1st movement
- Viola: Marais La Folia
- Cello: Squire Tarantella
- Bass: Marcello Sonata in G Major, movements 1 and 2

Violinists who are selected to play in SYASE may also be considered for the Violin Book 7/8 Demonstration Group Class. No separate audition or fee will be required.



# Student Events

## PIANO CONCERTO

Select one movement (unless otherwise specified) from the following list:

- J. S. Bach, Keyboard Concerto in g minor BWV 1058, 1st and 2nd movements, or 2nd and 3rd movements

- Haydn, Concerto in D Major Hob XVIII, No. 11, 1st or 3rd movement
- Mozart, Concerto No. 23 in A, KV 488
- Mozart, Concerto No. 11 in F, KV 413
- Mozart, Concerto No. 12 in A, K.414

- Mozart, Concerto No. 14 in Eb, K449
- Beethoven, Concerto No. 2 in B flat Major, Op. 19, 1st or 3rd movement

## INTERNATIONAL ENSEMBLES

- The exact day and time of the concert is to be determined.
- Groups who wish to apply may be composed of any instrumentation (primarily Suzuki-recognized instrument areas). Groups must include eight or more members.
- Ensembles must be affiliated with a program or teacher with a current SAA membership.
- Performers are expected to meet the age requirements noted in *Requirements for All Applicants*.
- Performing groups from the 2016 SAA Conference International Ensemble Concert are ineligible.
- All expenses must be borne by the group.
- Criteria for selection include but are not limited to: the overall quality of the performance, geographical representation, and presentation of a balanced and varied program.

### Audition and Application Requirements:

- Video material must be representative of the repertoire to be performed at the conference and generally must include the students who will participate in the event.
- Recorded performances of well-polished repertoire must be ten to twenty minutes.

### If Selected

- Selection process should be completed no later than November 15, 2017. Selected groups will be required to respond by November 30, 2017 whether or not they will accept the invitation to perform.



- If selected, the performance at the conference must not exceed eighteen minutes in length including stage set-up and any costume or stage changes, etc.
- Groups to perform will be required to submit the following by January 30, 2018: final program with exact timings of each piece, group photo, complete list of students to perform, any special staging or accompaniment needs or other special needs. Final program may include repertoire from the audition video.
- Performance groups will be provided a space for rehearsals (up to one hour) in a private space and thirty minutes in the performance venue on stage.
- Special equipment

or other performance requirements must be approved by the SAA, arranged by the group, and additional costs paid by the group.

- Each group is required to provide an adequate number of adult chaperones and must accept full responsibility for their group throughout the duration of their stay at the conference.
- A limited number of conference events may be open to the student groups. Additional fees may apply. Any additional (non-conference) activities must be planned and chaperoned by the group.



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Presents

## Montrose Trio

2018 SAA Benefit Concert  
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Photo by Jerry Zolynsky

Formed in 2014, Montrose Trio is a collaboration stemming from a long and fruitful relationship between pianist Jon Kimura Parker and the Tokyo String Quartet. Mr. Parker was the quartet's final guest pianist, and a backstage conversation with violinist Martin Beaver and cellist Clive Greensmith led to Montrose Trio's creation.

Named after Chateau Montrose, a storied Bordeaux wine long favored after concerts, with a nod to the Montrose Arts District of Houston and the street in Winnipeg where Mr. Beaver was raised, Montrose Trio has quickly established a reputation for performances of the highest distinction. In 2015 the Washington Post raved about their "absolutely top-notch music-making, as fine as one could ever expect to hear... they are poised to become one of the top piano trios in the world."

Montrose Trio gave their debut performance for the Chamber Music Society of Detroit, with subsequent performances at Wolf Trap, in Montreal, and at the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival. Their 2015–16 season included concerts in Philadelphia,

New York, Vancouver, Portland, Eugene, Baltimore, Jacksonville, Durham, Detroit, Buffalo, La Jolla, and at the Hong Kong Chamber Music Festival.

Pianist Jon Kimura Parker performs with major North American orchestras on a regular basis, including recent concerto performances with the orchestras of New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia. This season he appears with the orchestras of Indianapolis, Pittsburgh, Ottawa, Vancouver, Toronto, Colorado, and Washington, DC. He also appears in *Off the Score*, an experimental group with legendary Police drummer Stewart Copeland. He is artistic advisor of the Orcas Island Chamber Music Festival and professor of piano at the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University in Houston.

Violinist Martin Beaver has appeared as soloist with the orchestras of San Francisco, Indianapolis, Montreal, Toronto, and in Belgium and Portugal. A top prizewinner at the international violin competitions of Indianapolis and Montreal, he studied with Danchenko, Gingold, and Szeryng. Mr. Beaver was a founding member of the

Toronto String Quartet and Triskelion, and was the first violinist of the Tokyo String Quartet for 11 years. He is currently on faculty at the Colburn School in LA.

Cellist Clive Greensmith has performed as soloist with the London Symphony, the Royal Philharmonic, the English Chamber Orchestra, the Mostly Mozart Orchestra, the Seoul Philharmonic, and the RAI National Symphony Orchestra in Rome. He has worked with distinguished musicians including András Schiff, Claude Frank, and Steven Isserlis, and won prizes in the Premio Stradavari held in Cremona, Italy. Mr. Greensmith was the cellist in the Tokyo String Quartet for 14 years and is currently on faculty at the Colburn School in LA.

In 2016–17 Montrose Trio performs in cities including Cleveland, Indianapolis, Portland, Houston, Phoenix, and Toronto. For more information please see [montrosetrio.com](http://montrosetrio.com).



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# Session Proposals

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- Suzuki instrument area topics
- Suzuki Early Childhood Education
- Suzuki in the Schools

**They may also fall within more general categories:**

- Outreach and Community Service
- Community/Collaboration
- Studio Management
- Workshop or group class teaching and management
- Health and Wellness
- Teaching Tools
- Parent Education
- Communication
- Reading
- Composition, Theory, Music History
- Special Needs
- Technology
- Philosophy
- Suzuki Heritage

Formats can include lectures, demonstrations, interactive playing sessions, and panel discussions. Sessions are selected from proposals submitted by SAA members, parents, and friends.

**ALL PROPOSALS ARE DUE  
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**Topics with a focus on collaboration are particularly encouraged this year.**

What are your ideas for collaboration within the Suzuki studio and/or for making connections within the wider Suzuki community, and beyond?

Just a few of the many directions this intriguing theme can take us!

*(Note that some of these topics may be featured in special track sessions that group 25-minute presentations on related themes.)*

- Building community in your studio
- Chapter-to-chapter or studio-to-studio events and opportunities for sharing
- Peer-to-peer teacher learning (observing colleagues, pedagogy potlucks)
- Outreach to remote or isolated Suzuki studios
- Multi-instrument musical activities or performances
- Activities with local community organizations (symphonies, youth organizations, public or private schools, Montessori schools, other arts organizations, sporting events, public service organizations)
- Charity events with community-based institutions or groups
- Special outreach programs and performances, collaborations in areas such as music therapy
- Projects with composers
- Reaching out to music associations and societies, or organizations representing other learning methodologies
- International experiences or connections—Suzuki and non-Suzuki

If you would like to share your area of expertise through a session presentation at the conference, the submission form will be available soon. Sessions may be considered for 50- or 25-minute times. Please note that conference session proposals may be recommended for meeting other SAA needs, such as journal articles, podcasts, or online presentations.

Please visit [www.suzukiassociation.org/conference](http://www.suzukiassociation.org/conference) to submit a proposal.

## Always Start from Quality Ingredients

By Joseph Kaminsky

It was 1987 and after renting an apartment in Chicago for two years, my wife and I decided to look at something a little more permanent. We had been living on Marine Drive, a stone's throw from Lake Michigan. It was a distance from her podiatry school, and even farther from my teaching venues at both Beverly Hills and Wheaton College. But it was a beautiful, safe area, and the costs were low. I had found Chicago traffic very predictable, though—it always took at least 45 minutes to drive anywhere, and it seemed like a pragmatic decision to move to an area more centrally located to our commutes. We ultimately ended up in a beautiful 1904 brownstone condo in Oak Park. The structure was impressive, built of blocks of immense stones, and there was a sense of permanence in it that brought back fond memories of every home that I had lived in as a child. When I saw that beautiful stone and brick structure called Victoria Manor, I felt safe and secure buying a condo that I knew would certainly be there long after I wasn't around anymore. The quality ingredients of that condo allowed me peace of mind.

Even though my wife and I ended up in that condo, we looked at some houses in the process of our search—but those Chicago houses were too expensive for our budget. One weekend, in the Chicago Tribune Sunday paper, there was an advertisement in the real estate section for a unusually low-priced community of new homes that were having an open house. Enticed by the very low price, we went to the open house and saw a quaint-looking little house, obviously priced to attract the entry-level housing market. I did notice, however, that the foundations of those houses were not built of concrete, brick, or stone blocks—they were made of wood. With the fable about the “Three Little Pigs” in mind, we asked the salesperson about way the foundation was made. The salesperson

explained to us that the builder had found a way to fortify the lumber and construct the foundations out of wood, saving thousands of dollars. My wife and I asked him how durable the foundations would be in the long run, and he replied it was a new product, so there was no way of knowing for sure, but he thought they would last for decades and they had perhaps a 30-year guarantee. Then he added a statement that rattled me. He said, “The average person lives in a house for seven years, so most likely you would be long gone if this foundation didn't live up to expectations.” After hearing his sales pitch, we immediately knew we didn't want to take that chance, and

*The pride a family will feel when they have overcome many obstacles to achieve success is paramount to the development of their character.*

certainly didn't want to saddle anyone we would eventually sell the house to with a lemon.

I sometimes wonder if those homes are still standing and haven't succumbed to excessive settling by now. In my mind, there was nothing more important in a house than starting with a quality, solid foundation. The same philosophy holds true for setting up a student for playing a musical instrument. Although the eye-catching frills in that builder's house were impressive, having an untested foundation was too big a risk to take for me. I must admit, when I saw that price of those houses with all their bells and whistles, they certainly were an enticing option. The foundation in a house is usually something that you don't notice unless there is a problem. The décor, floor plan, and flow are usually the first things to catch the eye of a prospective buyer.

I think students far too often are obsessed with the frills of playing an

instrument to the detriment of focusing on the basics. They will focus on getting the notes quickly, often rushing ahead. They will proudly exclaim that they have the entire piece memorized, even before you give them the last page. They will boast that they “practiced” the piece by putting on the recording and playing along with it at performance tempo. They will plead for you to let them start the next piece because their friend is already on it, and they don't want to start falling behind their friend. But all this focus on the fluff often undermines their progress. Not realizing that practice promotes permanence instead of progress, many students reap the collateral damage of practicing too fast, without first having listened to the recording enough times to have mentally learned the piece, and without focusing on the basics, and they make that resulting collateral practice damage *permanent*.

“Permanent” may be too extreme a word, as nothing is truly permanent, but having taught multitudes of transfer students and having to strip back their playing to the bare bones of their structure, I know how difficult it is to “renovate” someone who has had years of faulty practice. There are some teachers who will not take transfer students for this reason, and even more Suzuki teachers who will not accept public school-trained students into their programs. (As a public school-trained student myself who was accepted into the studio of Donna Wiehe, my first private Suzuki teacher, when I was 11 years old, I really don't think that is fair to exclude those students who have a desire to play but perhaps didn't get the best start.)

Remedial teaching is a very difficult thing to do, but we do it all the time. There is a delicate balance of trying to boost the child's confidence while also trying to convince her that she needs to

change. If you show faith in the child and let her know that you believe she will become successful, only then can you get the child to believe in you and to let you bring her back to the basics. Sometimes remedial teaching can be frustrating, but once the “light comes on” it can be the most rewarding kind of teaching, for both the student and the teacher. The pride a family will feel when they have overcome many obstacles to achieve success is paramount to the development of their character.

How do we avoid having to do remedial teaching? Believe it or not, all teaching is remedial teaching, even with students we have started from the beginning. I can't think of one student that I started as a beginner that still didn't have some sort of deficiency in their playing as a high school senior. As careful as we teach and as careful as some families are at practicing, there will be something difficult that student and teacher both must overcome. Teaching does not happen in a vacuum. Students are not supervised every minute that they play. They play in orchestras and chamber groups, and sometimes they practice when they are tired or not focused. Sometimes even fairly young children do some of their practice without parental supervision. Additionally, as good as many Suzuki parents and teachers are, there are always different points of focus, and that alone will mean other points are not given due scrutiny. When a parent comes into my lesson and they first thing they say is, “This week we focused on such and such,” I know they are usually trying to deflect my attention from the other points they should be watching or other things they should be practicing.

If avoiding remedial teaching is impossible, how do we minimize it? This is highly feasible. I always get a kick out of parents when they come to the institutes I teach at and I show them little “tricks” for keeping the bow straight, or fixing left pinkies that “go into the basement.” They thank me profusely and then say, “What trick do you have for my other child who has this certain bad habit?” I will gladly share my “tricks,” as those tricks make the learning process fun and give families hope that they have finally found a way to fix something that their teacher has been trying to fix for years. That hope will give the families a new willingness to address problems. But much like society today, which often prefers to just take a pill to try to undo years of bad lifestyle decisions instead of changing the lifestyle, the “tricks” can only do so much. In music what is most important is that students and parents focus on doing it correctly far more repetitions than the student plays it incorrectly. Only then will the bad habit get changed.

**Start from quality ingredients.** That is the most important thing to do when practicing. By starting from quality ingredients each time when beginning to play, students can greatly reduce remedial work. When remedial practice is needed, the amount of time spent on it will be minimized. All great things start from quality ingredients. But not all things that start from quality ingredients become great. An award-winning chef and a novice college student cook can both start with the same quality ingredients and end up with dishes of completely different quality. A James Beard-awarded chef can probably even start from lesser ingredients and still turn out a darn good meal.

But that is because of their years of training and knowledge. A Suzuki student, without years and years of knowledge, can't.

If all our students and their parents would just go through a checklist to ensure they properly set up their instruments and bows, balancing everything to the best of their abilities, before they play a note, most bad habits can be avoided. And once the good habits have been repeated correctly a significant number of times, they will be automatic and not require focus anymore. When all of the major posture points have been set in place, then whatever minor posture problems are left can be focused on when playing.

I record what my students work on each week into my lesson planner and have a list of each student's top three posture priorities listed at the very top of the sheet. The lesson planner has space for about six months of lessons. When I have used up the available space, I give that planner to each family, and in doing so, I also look at the top three posture priorities I had listed to see if the students still need to focus on those issues. It gives me great pleasure to point out to a family that posture point number one is no longer an issue, and it can be bumped from my chart. Yes, posture point number two may now be bumped up to number one, and a smaller posture priority may now be added, but that is progress. Some of my students eventually reach the status of only having one posture issue to focus on, and that is usually a relatively minor one. But there is always something to attend to, even if it's only avoiding dropping your scroll when playing successive down bow chords or keeping the bow fingers loose and jiggy when playing 16th note passages.

A “smoke and mirrors” magic show when practicing is all fun and games, but the one tried and true way of giving yourself the best chance to succeed in playing a musical instrument is to start from a quality posture before you begin to play. Then stop frequently and “reboot” the posture. It's not that much fun for students, because it takes a little extra time before they start to play a piece, but it is crucial. It's not much fun checking how much gas is in the tank before a long road trip, and checking the tire pressure, the fluids, the tire tread, and checking to make sure you have packed everything, but if you don't, you are risking a bad trip. And we don't want a practice session to be a bad trip.

*Continued on p. 55*



**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*.

## Teaching Music Theory by Ear

### Combining Knowledge and Skill for Guitar Students

By Mychal Gendron

This article represents my efforts of the past several years to integrate a program of music theory into the private lessons and group classes of my Suzuki guitar studio. My own early guitar training (traditional, not Suzuki) included scales, intervals, chords and repertoire in the major and minor keys—all the major and minor keys, not just the relatively few guitar-friendly ones—in addition to a thorough technical grounding, and I continue to value what my first experience in music education continues to give me today.

It is troubling to see how often music theory is taught as a separate knowledge base from playing one's instrument, as it seems to result in some apprehension on the part of students regarding this topic as presented in many conservatories and college music programs. I have been trying to remedy this in my own studio by spending a small part of each lesson in dialogue with my students about theory elements appropriate for each level, supported by playing and without any visual teaching aids, on a weekly basis. This has been further supported by group class activities that repeat and review theory information, always with instruments in hand, so that we are continually developing what I think of as “music theory skill.”

I find that this ties in with some of the concepts of Suzuki philosophy, especially the belief that all children can develop complex skills and learn high-level concepts if they are presented in a way that opens young minds and hearts. Make the learning kid-friendly and fun, age and level appropriate, and students will succeed in the short term as well as in the longer term. And as a Suzuki instructor, I am able to embrace lifelong learning by taking any number of valuable lessons from the material in our guitar books to build a series of practical steps for my students to gradually achieve a deeper understanding of music. This article, then, is about fashioning a program of Music Theory by Ear—a work in progress that continues to develop and grow on a daily basis, but here it is (today, anyway):

#### Level One

It all begins in Guitar Book One, right there in the earliest stages of playing.

Suzuki Guitar Book One presents us with three tonalizations that give our students a critical technical base (skill) for later transposition and analysis. The guitar-friendly keys of G Major, D Major and A Major get us off and running in our understanding of the parameters of different note groupings—so we have G songs, D songs, and A songs (that's all we need to know right now), and that gives us our introduction to sharps (#), key signatures, and transposition, a very auspicious beginning.

#### Level Two

Students in Guitar Book Two are ready to develop their Book One skills and to explore the guitar fingerboard by transposing moveable scale forms.

- The A Major scale introduced at the end of Book One is ideal for transposition because it has no open strings. It can be presented in second position by naming the root of the scale as A—no other notes need to be named at this time. Transpose to a B scale by shifting a whole step to fourth position, to C in fifth position, D in seventh position, and E in ninth position. As with the A scale, identify only the root note of each scale.
- The process above can be applied to the D Major scale in second position by changing the left-hand fingering of the root from open fourth string to fifth string, fifth fret with the pinky. Transpose to E in fourth position, F in fifth position, and G in seventh position. While going further up the neck to A in ninth position is possible, it can be very challenging at this level, plus we already have an A Major scale in second position.

- There are several benefits to teaching this way as a beginning scale system. First, while there is no “logic” behind this like the famous Circle of Fifths (that will come later), there is an “alphabetical logic” that is very easy for students to grasp. Identifying only the root note of each scale saves students from too much information that will not be retained and physically reinforces important concepts like one fret = one half step and that half steps naturally occur between B-C and E-F. This can be taught as a tonalization exercise, with student/teacher dialogue, in lessons and group classes.

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## Level Three

The second half of Guitar Book Two introduces and develops free-stroke technique, which paves the way for the study of chords in Guitar Book Three.

- Introducing chords as a left-hand skill is appropriate at this level—students have been playing two-voice textures with fingered basses and have developed enough control and agility to take this next step easily. It is also important to satisfy a desire to know about chords that many students have at this point. The first three pieces in Book Three—Nonesuch, Greensleeves and Packington's Pound—are ideal for this, as all three use the same family of chords in similar progressions and the chords involved are physically manageable. C Major, G Major, E Major, a minor, and e minor may be played in open position with a simple down-beat strum to accompany the solo parts of the pieces above. Simply identifying the chords by name can suffice for now as students get physically comfortable with the left-hand shapes for the chords and develop their ability to move fluidly from one chord to the next.
- Practicing the major scale forms we have introduced is still valuable as a skill-building activity, but I have found that they are not the best vehicle for a first experience in identifying note names. I have had success introducing chromatic scales to students as a means of learning the entire guitar fingerboard while developing an understanding of our melodic system. Students begin by playing and naming notes in open position on each of the strings, then across the strings in open position, from sixth string to first string using sharps, followed by first string to sixth string using flats; take this a step further by playing and naming notes on each string in first, fifth and ninth positions with sharps, then ninth, fifth, and first positions using flats; other approaches may be added but this is a good, thorough way to begin if taken in small steps—one string or position per lesson, with ongoing student/teacher dialogue.

## Level Four

The Circle of Fifths is introduced. Students have developed sufficient skill in scale and chord playing to take the next step of organizing everything into a cohesive system and understanding its application to their playing.

- Having already tried, and failed, to teach this valuable learning tool to students using a printed diagram (as soon as we put the paper away, the

Circle was forgotten), I am now making this a regular, recurring part of our music theory discussion at the beginning of each lesson. I do employ a visual of sorts, by drawing an imaginary circle in the air between the student and me, pointing to the top of said circle to indicate the key of C Major, then down the circle to the student's right (my left) for the key

*Continued on p. 22*



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## Teaching Music Theory, continued from p. 21

of G Major, etc. We reiterate the process of counting up five to find sharp keys, four to find flat keys, concentrating on one key each lesson. The process for finding the sharps or flats in each key is also repeated each lesson, so the students are able, haltingly at first but more confidently in time, to name the notes in each key as they play the appropriate scale. One thing I have compromised on here is to refrain from going to the keys that guitar students are not likely to play in throughout their time with me as a teacher—B Major, F# Major, Ab Major, Db Major, Gb Major. I know that my first guitar teacher would be disappointed in me for this, but I am mindful now of my students needing to have a practical application of their knowledge in order for it to become a real skill.

- We have been preparing for this step since Book One, by practicing G, D and A tonalizations; we have developed this ability by learning two one-octave moveable scale forms in Book Two, and have prepared the way for chords and harmony by introducing several chords appropriate to the beginning pieces in Book Three. We have also begun to explore note recognition all over the fret board through chromatic scales.

## Level Five+

We are able to work through scales and chords appropriate to sharp major and flat major keys.

- The D Major scale form we have may be expanded to two octaves after all the one octave scales have been studied; a bass range may added to a few keys in order to expand to three octaves where possible.

- Chord study is introduced after scales have been thoroughly covered. We go back to the Circle of Fifths—repetition for reinforcement of knowledge and skill—and identify the I chord in each key we have studied, e.g. C Major chord for the key of C, G Major chord for the key of G. Chords are broken down into triads, counting intervals to learn the root, third, and fifth of each chord, then played on the guitar in root position, first inversion and second inversion—starting in open position and moving to higher positions on the first three strings to discover moveable chord forms.
- We explore the concept of I-IV-V-I chord progressions, and learning chord-to-scale relationships. I-IV-V-I in all of our keys are studied, played and broken down into triads as above, reinforcing the knowledge of finding keys and chords within each key.

## Next Steps

The steps outlined above take us through the music theory work I have done with my students to date. Next steps will include exploring secondary chords, minor keys and minor scales, and gradually applying these elements of music theory in student repertoire—which has actually already begun. As this is a work in progress, it is difficult to say exactly how it will proceed, but I believe it needs to be an ongoing part of the dialogue I have with my students in their lessons and groups – and with no end in sight.

## Postscript

As I look back at this article it is a little ironic to note how wordy and verbose it all seems, when the process I have been trying to describe here is very simple

and direct—in practice, my students and I only need to devote the first five minutes of our lessons to music theory skills for this effort to be effective and successful.

In summary, here are the essential points of “Teaching Music Theory by Ear”:

- **Early beginnings:** Guitar Book One gives us scales for building skill.
- **Develop the skill:** Scales can be expanded and transposed in Guitar Book Two.
- **New concepts:** Chord playing skill is appropriate in Guitar Book Three.
- **Apply skills to knowledge:** Chromatic scales as a first step, in Guitar Book Four.
- **Develop knowledge and skills:** Diatonic scales and chord progressions in different keys are explored in Guitar Books Five and above.
- All the steps above are achieved through the ongoing development of auditory and tactile skills, without visual references.

It has been gratifying to witness all of my students developing their ability and confidence in the study of music theory. Knowing keys, scales, and harmonies and the relationships formed by these different elements of music eliminates much guesswork in learning new repertoire. I am confident that, over time, this knowledge and skill will deepen my students' understanding and will take their playing to a much higher level. ••



**Mychal Gendron** is a registered teacher trainer in guitar. He maintains an active Suzuki guitar studio at the Rhode Island Philharmonic Music School and teaches at Suzuki institutes and workshops

throughout the country. He has been a regular presenter at SAA conferences and was guitar coordinator.



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## An Inspiring Viola Gathering

*By Julia Hardie*

The European Suzuki Viola Gathering took place at the Watford Music School in the town of Watford at Croxley Green, just north of London, on February 17–19, 2017. In total 230 Suzuki viola teachers, students, parents, and other supporters, representing 18 countries, attended.

This amazing viola event was sponsored by the European Suzuki Association. The idea to hold a viola gathering evolved from numerous discussions at ESA viola events. It was at the ESA European Convention in Davos, Switzerland, that the four organizers of the ESGV took on their roles. The organizers were violist Joanne Martin, of *I Can Read Music* fame; Peter King, Joanne's husband, an amateur violist and a university academic; Juan Drown, a professional violist and Suzuki viola teacher who teaches at the Watford Music School; and his wife, Mona Kodama, violinist and Suzuki violin and viola teacher who also teaches at the Watford Music School. This team did an outstanding job of attracting viola enthusiasts and providing satisfying activities for participation and enjoyment.

The Gathering had many things in common with a typical weekend Suzuki workshop but also aspects that were uniquely

viola. The emphasis in student classes was on group experiences and activities, not individual achievements. There were no masterclasses, but a serious review list of Suzuki repertoire was distributed before the Gathering and worked on in depth in classes. There were two levels of viola ensemble classes as well as an ensemble for non-readers. The ensemble teachers picked one ensemble piece from the ones their groups had read and then polished in subsequent classes for the final concert.

There was an inspiring professional recital by the viola quartet altoTune, comprised of Chris Brody, Geoff Irwin, Alexis Bennett and Juan Drown. In the music school lobby, luthier Sam Blade set up Thwaites Fine String Instruments featuring violas in various sizes, and bow maker Edwin Bloemsaat provided a bow shop.

There were seminars for teachers on a variety of topics, presented by Helen Brunner from the UK, Julia Hardie from the US, Sue Hunt from the UK, and Johannes Lievert from the Netherlands. There were "Viola for Violinists" classes for our violin teacher friends, and my personal favorite idea: viola

*Continued on p. 24*

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*Viola Gathering, continued from p. 23*

classes for parents, with rental violas available, so they could Twinkle with their children.

All of the faculty donated their teaching time. I felt honored to be among the faculty teachers who taught some classes, but also loved that all teachers, whether teaching classes or not, interacted freely, seemed to feel included, and played in the final concert.

#### A shout-out for Bill and Doris Preucil:

I met and thoroughly enjoyed several European Suzuki viola teachers who

took training with Bill in Ireland in the 1990s and were inspired by both Bill and Doris. Ilona Telmanyi from Denmark sends warm greetings and led Nina on the final concert!

Such a final concert! It was impeccably organized and beautiful. I often tell my students that the only sound more beautiful than the tone of a beautifully played viola is the sound of many beautifully played violas. Imagine the looks on the faces of children and parents who heard the gorgeous tone of 186 violas!

Plans are already underway for the follow-up event—ESVG 2019! ••



Joanne Martin with Julia



**Julia Hardie** is the founder and director of the Central Texas String Academy in Waco, Texas. Julia is a Suzuki Association of the Americas viola teacher trainer. Her background includes a DMA in Viola from the U. of Iowa under

William, Preucil, Sr. and study with violists, Bruno Giuranna and Paul Doktor. Julia has served on the faculties of NM St. U. and Baylor U., as conductor of the Waco Youth Orchestra, and is past president of the North Texas Suzuki Association. Currently, in addition to her full studio of Suzuki viola and violin students, Julia is assistant principal violist of the Waco Symphony. She often presents workshops where she is an advocate for starting viola study at an early age, and she teaches at Suzuki Institutes throughout the country.

## Matt Jefferson, Bass Trombone

*You started out as a young Suzuki piano student and are now a professional bass trombonist. Share that journey with us.*

I would love to tell you about some amazing story of perseverance over adversity, but I think my story is pretty straightforward and normal. I grew up in London, Ontario, Canada, which is where all of my Suzuki experience happened. I started playing piano at a Suzuki school called the Children's Talent Education Centre (CTEC) at the age of three. My teachers were Dorothy Jones and after a few years, her son David Jones. Nothing really felt special or different about my life when compared to other kids—I played baseball, I was a good student, and I took piano lessons. That pretty much described each and every one of my friends, too. It wasn't until moving to Calgary, Alberta, when I was 11 that I stopped taking piano lessons, and I finished Suzuki Books Six and Seven on my own. By the time I got to middle school band, I had pretty much completed the Suzuki curriculum. I would also say that was the point where I started to see how much my musical background set me apart, when looking at other band kids. Again, most of my band friends had taken piano lessons for several years, but I was by far the most accomplished. Even though a lot of them were still taking lessons, I could still play the most advanced music (stuff from Book Six or Seven). It didn't feel challenging, it was just what I had learned to play. There were other things that I couldn't play—Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata was a common one that my friends would learn that I never had. So I just assumed that this is how things were—I would be good at some things and bad at others. I was an okay trombone player; in grade seven they placed me in the top band with ninth graders, but I was by no means blowing anyone away with my incredible skill. I could play all the same notes that the older kids could, but by the time I was in grade nine, all the other guys in the section kind of sounded like me. I could do some things better, but they could do other things better than me too. No big deal.

The first time that I was ever blown away by the talent of one of my peers was when I started high school. Carl Lundgren and I started at the same time and he was amazing. He was the one who informed me that I had perfect pitch. The band director asked the class if anyone had perfect pitch. I didn't know what that was, so I just looked around the class to see who raised their hand. Carl did, but told everyone that I was the one who had it. I



Photo by Matt Wan

was super surprised until Mr. Uzick (the band director) then walked over to the piano to “test” me. He played a note and asked me what it was. I told him. Everyone freaked out. I had no idea that not everyone could do that—my sister could as well—and I had never consciously considered pitch independently of music I had learned.

Carl was really proactive about getting involved in musical activities outside of school: the Calgary Youth Orchestra, Kiwanis Festival, and the Mount Royal Conservatory Academy program. He dragged me along into each as well; I was more focused on baseball and never thought I was good enough on trombone to do them, so it was really because of his urging that I auditioned for all these and eventually got in. He eventually chose to audition at the University of North Texas, which had a strong trombone studio, but I didn't think I could get into an American school.

He pointed out that I had nothing to lose, and my parents agreed, so we both went down to audition and both got in.

I think what the Suzuki program helped me to do is not to look at musical skill like a “talent” or a “special ability.” I was a part of the community and the strong musical environment enabled me to unlock elements within myself that most people can't/don't access because of the limitations of the traditional music lesson setting. Seeing your friends and siblings do things, constantly listening to live music, and feeling free to interact with other students and teachers has infinitely more potential opportunities arise than a one-on-one lesson between a student and a teacher.

### *Do you have a personal motto?*

Not an articulated one, no, but I suppose it would be something like, “Music first, everything else follows—form follows function.”

### *Tell us about your musical life when you were a child.*

My sister, who is three years older than me, began the Suzuki violin program the same year that I was born. My mom was a Suzuki piano teacher as well. I was always involved in baby classes with my parents, hearing my sister practice, being surrounded by friends and family who played, listened, or simply supported music. I don't remember a time where I didn't hear

*Continued on p. 26*

*Spotlight, continued from p. 25*

some sort of live music growing up, whether it was me or my sister practicing, hearing my dad sing in the church choir, or going to CTEC where my mom taught lessons—my sister and I took lessons there too, although not from my mom—music was very much ingrained in our day-to-day lives. As we got a bit older, CTEC had a Celtic fiddle group in which my sister played and I accompanied the group on piano. It's funny to type all this out and realize how much music shaped my childhood, because I really just felt like a normal kid. I didn't live and die for music, I just went to places like CTEC because my parents took me there. Once there, I wasn't magically drawn to the piano, I wanted to go play with my friends. They weren't musical games we played, either; it was just regular kid stuff. I guess I feel that my musical career was shaped by my musical environment, and I just unconsciously absorbed it.

***What's one thing you've learned from your Suzuki background that you wish others understood?***

What I really love about my Suzuki background is how much emphasis is placed upon listening. Looking back and realizing that I can still remember and play some of the music I learned as a kid, and I can play a bunch of my sister's violin music on the bass trombone, is kind of amazing. I don't need the

music; it's just stuck in my brain. I remember sitting through CTEC performances and the piano and violin group classes. Sometimes I would be playing, other times I would be listening. Funnily enough, I remember hating them, but I had to sit there to support my sister and friends or else my mom would get mad. I would get so restless because I would have preferred to play baseball, run around, or *doing* something. Anything would have been better than being forced to sit there quietly, listening to classical music. In hindsight, what was actually going on during those moments was that I would be hearing the same music again and again and again, some of it played well and some of it played poorly, but my musical concept would just get stronger and stronger. I wasn't working on technique for hours each and every day, I just listened. My process hasn't changed now that I'm a professional, either. I just listen, and the technique takes care of itself.

***Was practicing ever a struggle for you?***

Yes, I hated practicing—I didn't see the point. Sitting there trying to perfect something that I didn't really care to perfect was tough. Eventually, I found a way that I could tolerate. On an Excel spreadsheet, I wrote out the name of every song in each Suzuki book as well as some of the other pieces that I had learned along the way. Then, I would randomize the titles and print out the sheet. I would set a timer for thirty minutes or an hour, and just start playing through them beginning to end. Once I finished a piece, I checked it off, and started the next one. When the timer went off, I was done practicing for the day.

Now that I'm older, I still struggle with practicing, but I've learned that setting clear, accomplishable goals is the way that works for me. I'm not a guy who enjoys sitting there for hours fine-tuning a three note passage, but now that I understand *why* that needs to be done, I can customize the practicing process accordingly.

***What role do you feel arts education plays in character building?***

I think it's the most unappreciated component of character building in North America. Competition is celebrated through sports, education is celebrated through university degrees, family of course is maybe the most significant of them all, but the impact that the arts have on education is harder to define. As such, it seems like there is a never-ending reduction of arts funding from year to year. With that said, I think that in time the few who find a way to continue to educate youth through the arts will see an enormous difference of character between those who appreciate and those who do not.

***If you could offer your younger Suzuki self or Suzuki students today any advice, what would it be?***

Keep going! The Suzuki program is like a huge investment of time and energy, but investments pay off in the long run. Patience can be difficult for kids and the constant pressure of instant gratification that is pervasive in our society doesn't make it any easier. But when you persevere through it all, you'll be glad you did.

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Photo by Matt Wan



While **Matt Jefferson** is best known as the bass voice of the acclaimed trombone quartet Maniacal 4, his versatility extends to classical and commercial music as well. Equally versed on bass trombone, tenor trombone, and tuba, he has performed with the Louisiana Philharmonic, the Acadiana Symphony Orchestra, and the Grammy-nominated *One O'Clock Lab Band*.

A graduate of University of North Texas, Matt's true passion is for teaching. He constantly tries to challenge the limitations of traditional institutionalized education to help students think outside the box and maximize their learning potential to achieve their goals. During his three years as an active freelancer in Louisiana, he was also a valued faculty member of Nicholls State University.

A forward-thinking "people person," Matt is an ardent student of life. In addition to his music career, he does freelance video production. He also is an enthusiastic sports fan and self-confessed bookworm whose tastes range from Malcolm Gladwell to Christopher Moore. Originally from London, Ontario, Matt grew up in Calgary and now lives in Chicago with his wife and two cats.

### Editor's Note:

In this issue, ASJ introduces a new column, "Spotlight," which will feature in each issue a notable Suzuki graduate, supporter, or community member who the wider Suzuki community may not be aware of. Our hope is to create a continuing conversation about the Suzuki method's influence in individual's lives, and by extension, its benefits to wider society. If you would like to suggest a subject for future "Spotlight" columns, please email [publications@suzukiassociation.org](mailto:publications@suzukiassociation.org).



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## CODA Outreach Program Nurtures Suburban Communities

By Carol McNeil

The Community School of the Arts at Wheaton College (Wheaton, Illinois) directs a large, entirely grant-funded outreach project that operates within public school districts and community settings in DuPage County, Illinois. This project, Community Outreach for Developing Artists (CODA), offers five programs serving 1,600 students. Offerings include Early Childhood Music and Visual Arts, Suzuki Method Violin and Recorder instruction, and Brush with Art for the senior citizen population. CODA enters school districts where two conditions exist: 1. There are no art or music programs in place that duplicate CODA's offerings; 2. 60 percent or more of the students come from low-income households as defined by Illinois State Report Cards.



Photo by Michael Hudson Photography

### Vision for the CODA Program

In January 2005, Wheaton College Associate Professor of Music Johann Buis shared with then CSA Director Jody Grandlienard his personal struggle to pursue musical studies as a young person amidst the segregation of apartheid in South Africa. He challenged CSA to broaden the scope of students served, both demographically and economically. From that small spark, fueled by Grandlienard's enthusiasm and efforts, emerged the beginnings of the CODA Program.

### History of CODA's Suzuki Method Programs

CODA offers two Suzuki Method programs, violin and recorder.

A small violin program began in 2007 and served a handful of students at the World Relief Preschool in Wheaton and the Addison YWCA. Upon permanent closure of the Addison YWCA in 2008, the program relocated to Public School District 33 in West Chicago, Illinois, which continues to house the program today. Select students from CODA's Early Childhood music classes, with interest and parental support, were identified and recruited for District 33's initial program. From small beginnings (five students in 2009 to 100 students in 2017), the program has grown and flourished.

Like the violin program, recorder classes began at World Relief in 2007 and in 2011 expanded to include kindergarten students in District 33. The program vacillated through several methodologies and student populations before

singularly embracing the Suzuki Method in 2014. In 2014, the CODA recorder program expanded to include three Illinois public school districts (15, 16, and 33) and, modeled after the violin program, met after hours with parents in attendance. The program now totals 51 students.

### Growth in Violin Program

The Suzuki Method for the violin program was a natural extension of CSA's programming. CSA faculty members Carol Ourada and Lisa Hirschmugl, both seasoned and credentialed Suzuki strings teachers, embraced the vision of outreach with unequalled passion and flexibility. They innately understood the potential of the program to nurture students, families, and the greater community. As funding ebbed and flowed, they made necessary adjustments to keep the program going.

In 2012, a substantial boost in funding enabled rapid growth and the need for further definition and structure for the program became evident. The identification of performance levels (largely paralleling the Suzuki book levels), addition of reading and repertoire classes, hiring of new staff, and policy development for attendance and practice cemented a solid and replicable program. Children were rewarded extra individual lesson time as they demonstrated consistent progress, practice and attendance.

As positive reputation for the program grows, opportunities for performance and collaboration have increased. Janet

Parents: What is most important about the CODA violin program to you?

Since having the CODA program in our community I have noticed that the children are now more interested in music programs, and as a result are participating in higher numbers in art school programs. My daughter has a promising future because of CODA.

I love the opportunity that my daughter has gotten to learn an instrument. Doing this has brought her out of her shell and has given her more confidence. She has learned that through practice nothing is impossible.

Yo creo que es un programa muy fabuloso en donde los niños pueden aprender y expresar sus sentimientos.

What is most important to me about CODA is that it provides my son with the opportunity to learn about music, how to play on an instrument, and it facilitates him in having a successful life. Playing on violin strengthens his math skills and teaches him perseverance through regular practice.

The most important thing about CODA is that all of the kids learn more and more and that they get to enjoy it as much as we enjoy listening to them play.

Lo mas importante de coda para mi es poder disfrutar de mi hijo Gabriel que se divierte tocando violin con todos sus amigos y los niños se mantienen ocupados haciendo algo que les gusta.

The most important thing about CODA is that they do not just teach about music, they teach the discipline of being responsible.

Sikma, District 33 Orchestra teacher, regularly includes CODA students (both those who are dually enrolled and those yet too young) to perform at District 33 concerts. Sikma also gifts time to serve as a substitute teacher for CODA, giving a nod to the value she places on the program. Twice a year, CODA violin students merge with tuition paying students on Wheaton's Campus, performing common repertoire in large-scale concerts in Edman Chapel, Wheaton College's largest venue. Because of the universality of the Suzuki Method's repertoire, the two groups blended with unity and cohesion. Other performances abound on the home front where CODA students give back to their own West Chicago community through participation in a mariachi ensemble, recitals, a special performance for the families of District 33's Dream Team aftercare program, and other cultural events.

The biggest challenge with the violin program is that there are far more requests for enrollment than CODA can accommodate. Cost being the limiting factor, CODA is unable to add students to the violin roster. Although disappointing in many ways, students are invited to the Suzuki Method Recorder Program, which is less costly.

## Growth in Recorder Program

Initially recorder classes took place during the school day with young children. The approach was eclectic, blending Suzuki philosophy with traditional methodology, and incorporating singing and movement for added interest. This approach met with varying degrees of success, but was a concern for CODA Administrator Carol McNeil, who joined CODA in 2013. With a strong public school background, McNeil recognized that there was too much duplication between the CODA recorder program and public school programs.

In the summer of 2014, armed with abundant questions and more than a little apprehension, McNeil and Janine Means Bacon, Wheaton College junior and music education major, traveled to Memphis, TN, to attend Suzuki Recorder



Photo by CODA Staff

Book One Teacher Training. Mary Halverson Waldo, Suzuki Recorder Teacher Trainer in North America, patiently processed endless queries from McNeil about what a CODA Suzuki Method Recorder Program might look like. Bacon, with a strong woodwind background, flourished in the training and almost immediately embraced the program. Having experienced a more traditional recorder training in her youth, she was amazed and delighted to see the differences between typical classroom recorder pedagogy and Suzuki recorder pedagogy. In the fall of 2014, Bacon piloted a Suzuki Method Recorder Program in District 33. Bacon taught an average of nine students in after school classes. Like the violin program, students were required to have a parent attend lessons with them and document home practice times.

This pilot year offered its challenges, the greatest of which was that classes met in the same facility and during the same timeframe as the violin classes. Some families enrolled a child in recorder lessons with the intent of switching to violin just as soon as an opening became available. To some, the recorder did not have the instant appeal of a violin. There were students, however, who were committed to recorder instruction.

Continued on p. 31

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Waldo helped CODA gain perspective: a program does not have to be the largest and most attractive to be effective and valuable. As the 2015–2016 school year approached, Bacon, now a Wheaton College Music Education graduate and trained in Suzuki Recorder Book One, was ready for the task. Building on learnings from the past year, Bacon introduced Suzuki Method recorder in two additional districts, with the target population being kindergarten students. She grouped children by ability in classes of approximately five students, and by year's end, 50+ students participated in solo recitals, showcasing the beauty of tone

and stage presence so characteristic of Suzuki Method students. The 2016–2017 academic year has maintained this enrollment, now with some first grade students whose musicianship and stage performance is remarkable. Further performance opportunities (district band concerts, family night events) already on district calendars are opening as the program gains prominence.

## Highlights of the Suzuki Method Programs

The **violin program** has experienced many highlights over the past 10 years. Cited below are a few:

During the 2013–2014 school year, CODA Violin collaborated with the Fox Valley Symphony's El Sistema program bringing in clinician Stephanie Mujica Peraza to teach a student workshop on basic musicianship skills and violin technique.

During the 2015–2016 school year, Winifred Crock, long term director of orchestras at Parkway Central High School in St. Louis, worked with CODA reading classes utilizing her published approach.

For three consecutive years, CODA upper level violin students have participated in assessments designed to be low in stress but high in benefit for teachers and students alike. Tapping into timely themes (i.e. the Olympics or World Series), these assessment day activities



Photo by Michael Hudson Photography

include opportunities for students to perform a polished piece, demonstrate scale proficiency, and sight-reading for an outside adjudicator. Comment sheets reveal trends and are instructive for students and CODA teachers alike.

Nine advanced CODA violin students were pursued/accepted in the select Naperville Youth Symphony during in 2016. They were provided with scholarships that cover both their admittance fee and concert attire.

The **recorder program** too has experienced high points:

### *Weekend to remember*

On May 19–21, 2016, Mary Halverson Waldo visited the program, observing classes and providing objective input and suggestions for the future.

On May 21, *Quinta Essentia*, internationally known Brazilian recorder ensemble, gifted the CODA Recorder Program with a concert and welcomed CODA children to join them on stage to play a song from the Suzuki Recorder School repertoire. Young CODA students and their families caught a vision, many for the first time, of the possibilities of the recorder as a beautiful, engaging solo and ensemble instrument.

## The Inspiration Moving Ahead

Dr. Suzuki was always more interested in creating good citizens than good

musicians. CODA teachers resonate with this passion. They understand that the discipline and accountability of fine music instruction can change the trajectory of a child's life, opening doors of opportunity previously unapproachable. By providing cost free Suzuki Method instruction, CODA students are learning, at a young age, to begin paying it forward. Such is the case for Timothy, whose mother, Sarah, shares his story:

"Timothy is now nine and is on the autism spectrum. Timothy is extremely shy and will not converse in a group, even of his own peers. But hand him a violin and tell him how to play it and he is

one of the group; a capable participant. Timothy will not speak directly with guests in our home, but will pull out his violin and play from the living room so he is sure they will hear him. It is his contribution."

CODA services are provided at no cost to students in identified school districts in DuPage County. However, CODA is not cost free. If you are interested in knowing how you can contribute to the ongoing outreach of the CODA Program, please visit [csa.wheaton.edu/CODA](http://csa.wheaton.edu/CODA) or email [carol.mcneil@wheaton.edu](mailto:carol.mcneil@wheaton.edu).



**Carol McNeil** is dually trained as a music educator and a general education teacher. Additionally, her MAT degree has an emphasis in the integration of music and reading. Her primary instrument is piano, but she is trained in Orff, recorder, Music Learning Theory,

Interactive Music, Education through Music, and Musikgarten. Her educational passion is in using music to bring benefit to children across the curriculum. Carol serves as the Administrator of the CODA Program. Carol oversees all aspects of CODA including: hiring and evaluation of CODA staff, research and set-up for new sites, leadership in curriculum and goal setting, vision casting, grant research and writing, and communication with administrative personnel in all locations.

## ¡Mira! A Glimpse inside CODA's Suzuki Program

By Carol Ourada

It is 3:45 on a Wednesday afternoon in West Chicago, Illinois. The school door swings open and soon the air is full of the sound of pattering feet, unzipping violin cases, clinking of assembling music stands, hugging parents, and cries of “hola maestra, hello teacher!” Soon the sound of scales, Veracini gigue, and mariachi music flows out of the advanced students’ room. These fourth through eighth graders, like the other students, receive a group class, a reading class, and a lesson class. High school volunteers from our tuition-based program soon arrive to greet the students with smiles.

Across the hall, the second-level reading class is underway with theory games, reading books, and cultural music. One older sibling is aiding by playing along, and another taps the drum like a metronome as the teacher conducts. Younger siblings inch their way into the circle to see the students working on setting cards into large fingerboard charts. Parents are inside and outside the rooms, listening, talking, and assisting children to their rooms. We have four levels of reading class, divided by age and repertoire level. The younger students receive pre-reading activities in a class when we can offer it or in the lesson.

In the third room, the youngest group class is warming up on “gran chico gran chico” on open strings and Twinkles. “Now let’s try Chocolate Cake” (a simplified French Folk song), says Grace Walker. “I play that, teacher!” Group class day is underway for the outreach program CODA, Community Outreach for Developing Artists. First these children received early childhood classes, then those interested children enrolled in the violin program and recently, our Suzuki recorder program.

The students and families are a close-knit group. Social gatherings are ubiquitous in the West Chicago community and group class is a perfect fit. The parents come to the classes and lessons. Lisa Hirschmugl, one of the three CODA violin teachers, describes the classes as “both celebratory and productive.” Lesson classes have a community spirit with the students paired and supporting one another. In the classroom, one student may be having a lesson, while other students are watching and waiting. “Come and hear the beautiful tone on Go Tell Aunt Rhody,” the teacher beckons. Students and siblings in the room either listening close by or quietly coloring gather around the violinist playing. “I like that!” says one. Heads nod, smiles all around, while the violinist beams. The mother smiles, too, as she takes notes. These classes are reminiscent of lessons in Matsumoto, with multiple families waiting their turn, or institute lesson classes where all are learning while one has the focus.

With the shorter lesson times, the teacher becomes a master of the one point lesson. When teaching in a bilingual setting, use of fewer words and more creative visual teaching aides ease the road to progress and confidence. Some of our developments: Pre-Twinkle CD with open string rhythms and



Photo by CODA Staff

Pre-Twinkle songs, YouTube recordings, colored notes for the different strings, larger layout, and alphabet letters or numbers inside the note heads. This makes music easier for parents to assist the children and the students have a higher level of accuracy in reading and learning new music.

Another special resource is older students regularly helping the younger set. Siblings and cousins and friends practice together and help warm up. “There is an accident so I’m stuck in traffic!!!” texted one of our teachers to me one wintery day. “Can your student Frances start off the class?” I replied, “Yes, no problem!” So Frances was handed a clipboard with a lesson plan. “Can you do this?” “Yes! I love doing this! I want to be a teacher and do this always!” she exclaimed. I replied, “I will be across the hall with the door open. Just look at me and I will come help you if needed.” The class went smoothly, all the students had a productive day, and Frances had a taste of being a teacher in charge.

We discovered that our reading curriculum needed to be more stepwise. The students were all in a different place with reading ability and they needed to be able to learn the songs with minimal parent help. We found a solution in offering

different formats and levels of the same song. Here is an example: “Okay, Reading 1 class, let’s open our books to Marching Along. Choose your favorite way to read it—either the two-line staff (with no stems and black notes) or alphabet version. Good! Now turn the page and let’s read together the alpha notes on the five-line staff. Do you see the patterns? Let’s find the skips. Let’s sing our note names. Next, let’s get out our pattern packets...” Winifred Crock was an invaluable resource in developing our steps to literacy. Students also play pattern packets with multiple examples using notes in color then black and grey, on a one-line, two-line, or five-line staff. The students now read through these beginning reading books with ease on the path to being in orchestra. Another plus is that our tuition based program reading classes get the benefit of our revised materials, too.

## Widening Horizons

When we first began offering lessons, the parents were not sure that preschool children could play the violin. The CODA program has given them a new vision for their children, and their eyes shine with pride as their children accomplish a new skill or play on a big stage.

It has been rewarding to see the parents grow, as well, in confidence, in their skills helping their children,

and seeing the love flow out into the community.

As one CODA mother explained, “The most important thing about CODA is the impact it has made in my children’s lives; we as a family and also a community experience the need of children growing up and becoming responsible, kind, respectful, organized and disciplined adults. In my children I have started to implement all of these qualities at a very young age thanks to the wonderful role model and amazing personality of our teacher.”

As teachers, we stretch our teaching skills by stepping into a new culture—learning mariachi and the folk songs of Latin America; going on field trips to see mariachi groups, collaborating as a part of workshops with professional mariachi players, and being out in the community of our students.

“The violin has changed my life.” This comment came from several students when we asked them, “What do you like about violin?” The children we teach are in a community with financial challenges and the preschool serves children who are at risk with delays or needs in speech, language, physical, and other learning abilities. Their violin studies make a huge impact on these children in many ways. Like our other Suzuki children, they grow more noble hearts, learn to practice, have responsibility, work with others, and grow in confidence. In some cases, the family has hardships,

Students: What do you like about violin?

Lo que a mi me gusta de CODA es que me dieron una oportunidad de tocar el violín y que al mismo tiempo te enseñan algo nuevo.

The most important thing about violin is that I can play songs that are challenging and exciting. And I learned how to read music. I have a great teacher that helps me out a lot and makes violin fun!

What I like about CODA is that we learn something new every day.

What I like about coda is that when they teach you a song, they don’t give up until you fully know it and remember it. What I like about playing music is that sometimes it helps me calm down.

with one parent working night shifts or double shifts, or one parent is in another country. Many do not have a car so they walk to lessons, carpool or take a taxi. These families show much dedication, respect, and appreciation for their music experiences.

One middle school student said that after a day at school, music helps him calm down and relax. The mother of a five-year-old violinist and recorder player said that her son was able to function on task willingly in school without a personal aide after two semesters of lessons. Some of the students were born premature and have physical fine motor and learning delays. One student worked on Flower Song and Monkey Song for two years, and now as a fourth grader, has the skills to play Book Five pieces and mariachi. One student has significant special needs. The other children are so caring and helpful with this boy as plays his Pre-Twinkle songs and parts of Twinkle for several years. His progress is in tiny steps, but the joy he has hearing the music in the groups

*Continued on p. 34*



Photo by CODA Staff



Photo by Michael Hudson Photography

*¡Mira!, continued from p. 33*

with the other children is priceless. We have an aftercare program at the school and we intersect with these children on various times of the year. We do performances for them and their parents and this year different grades will visit our groups on specific days and join us in improvisation using Creative Ability Development games.

Important to note is that the CODA violinists and recorder students all received our early childhood classes first. Initially taught by our violin teachers also trained in early childhood, these weekly classes lay the foundation for their further music studies. Woven into the curriculum are Suzuki pieces, opportunity to be exposed to recorder and violin, with the classroom teacher using CD's for listening. The Suzuki ECE philosophy of core activities and songs being repeated throughout the year shaped our weekly offerings.

## Collaboration

Another aspect of the outreach program is opportunities for collaboration. We were so fortunate to have support of school orchestra director Janet Sikma, who also is a Suzuki parent. She describes the CODA partnership:

“The CODA violin program has been a wonderful addition to our musical family in West Chicago Elementary District 33. In the 14 years I’ve been in the district, the orchestra program has grown from fewer than 60 students to more than 200, with five levels of orchestras, and

a quickly expanding mariachi program. Continuous collaboration amongst teachers has led to increased participation in all of our ensembles, as more and more families see the benefits and joy that come from making music. CODA provides an opportunity for my students to study great literature

and receive individualized technique instruction that they would not otherwise have, because of financial and/or cultural barriers. I believe our students in West Chicago are in a fortunate to receive the gift of music instruction within a community of caring, committed teachers.”

It is cool to play the violin in West Chicago. Another collaboration with the Naperville Youth Symphony gave the families the fabulous experience of watching their children playing with a big orchestra in a big beautiful auditorium.

## Dreams

Over the years, we have celebrated several major milestones and have seen dreams become reality. We started small and have seen our program grow. With the awarding of a major grant several years ago, we purchased a large number of instruments, accomplishing a primary goal.

“The dream is coming true; we reached a milestone—our students can now play Bach Double!” Lisa Hirschmugl proclaimed last December. Indeed, we now have a core of students who are Book Four and above and who can model for the younger ones. We also have a dream of training the older students to teach and assist us in the program. We aim to offer the older students these stepping stones with the hopes of them returning to their community to teach Suzuki and be in leadership roles.

“Un gran aplauso para los violinistas!” announced the emcee for the Fiesta

stage at the county fair in July. Twenty-eight CODA students happily played “El Jarabe Tapatio” and other maricachi and Suzuki tunes. Learning their cultural music has been a joy for the parents, teachers, and students. This has opened the door to opportunity to play in community events and festivals.

## Reflections

One afternoon in our second year of CODA, one of our teachers stopped by a family’s home. Two of their girls were taking violin. “Hello maestra. Please come in, see my daughter.” Upon entering the girls’ room, the four-year-old pointed, “Hello teacher, see, I have a dress for recital.” The teacher could see the closet held two dresses, and the other items in the room were two teddy bears and two violins.

We are grateful to help bring the Suzuki method to these families and their community. There are challenges, however, the rewards shine over all. Maybe a community near you is waiting for an outreach hand holding a violin. Suzuki sensei said, “With love, much can be accomplished.” ●●



**Carol Ourada** is on the faculty of the Wheaton College Community School of the Arts, teaching primarily Suzuki cello, and also violin, viola, music reading, Creative Ability Development improvisation and cello choir. In addition, Carol teaches and coordinates in

the Wheaton College Community Outreach for Developing Artists, CODA, an initiative that began in 2006 and has grown to offer early childhood and Suzuki violin and recorder classes to over 1,000 refugee and at-risk children, including 100 violinists, 50 recorders in connection with World Relief and two school districts. Carol developed the early childhood and violin curriculum and was administrator for many years, now focusing on the violin program, which is taught in a bilingual setting. Carol was the 12th SAA Conference Coordinator and served on the SAA board of directors. In 2007 she was awarded ASTA Outstanding Studio Teacher of Illinois. Carol is a clinician at workshops and institutes around the country. She studied violin with Dr. Shinichi Suzuki in Matsumoto in 1985.

# Perspectives on Suzuki by Mary Craig Powell

From the Suzuki Heritage Interview Series,  
May 2010 conference, edited by Pam Brasch

I always loved music as a child, and I remember that my parents, especially an aunt, always would sing to me. She'd sit on a swing and sing me to sleep at night in our North Carolina home on our front porch. I grew up loving it. Both grandmothers had a piano, and I didn't. When I went to their homes, I would play and play and begged for a piano. Finally at Christmas, when I was in the fourth grade, Santa brought me my first piano. It was just a love affair for me from the beginning—with piano and with music.

I ended up majoring in music, and I thought that I wanted to teach at the college level and that's the way I began, as a university teacher. I have done that off and on throughout the years, as well as teaching children, but through my own two sons, I learned about the Suzuki Method for violin. My husband was also a musician, and we were so excited about it. When each of our two sons was four, they began Suzuki violin instruction. I thought I had never seen anything so wonderful and awesome. My oldest son, who began first, did so well that my head was very big. I could hardly get it through the door. I thought I had a little genius for a child, until we took him to Stevens Point, Wisconsin, the first of the Suzuki institutes. I then realized that there were lots of children who were just as good and better. So my head, instead, was swelling big for the Suzuki Method. When the Suzuki Violin teacher told me, "There's such a thing as Suzuki Piano, by the way," there was no way I could ignore it, not look into it.

I did my first teacher training at Stevens Point. It was the kind of training that was offered in the early years—a five-day course where we were trained in all of the Suzuki books. When I left, I wasn't sure I knew what I was doing, and there wasn't much to read, so I really had to just gather my thoughts from

the Suzuki Violin and reapply it to the piano technique and use the philosophy. So, while I wasn't really a pioneer, I was one who was involved in the beginning stages. It became, for me, the most wonderful thing aside from my family that I've ever done. I must say that I have realized my potential as a piano teacher to the fullest through this method.

## *Has this method helped your own playing?*

I listen more. I've learned to listen more to myself, and I listen more to recordings of great artists. I feel like I have gained an additional degree through such refined listening. It has helped me tremendously.



*You mentioned that you went to Stevens Point, and you were initially amazed by the quality of the playing. The philosophy, though, is different than the pedagogy and from producing wonderful players. How and when did you get into the philosophy?*

I got into the philosophy when my children began Suzuki Violin. The teacher had me read *Nurtured by Love*, and then I felt that more than anything else, I absorbed the philosophy through her teaching. I did read what was available, and I loved it. In a way, it seemed like I was already a Suzuki Piano teacher. I had such great love for children, and I felt that the children came first and the music took second. Even as a traditional piano teacher, I found that I had done many of the same things that Suzuki embraced.

*I have seen several of your students play, and I can see on their faces how they're feeling that day and hear it in their music. How do you produce that in a child?*

I'm able to get that response through using a lot of Suzuki teaching techniques. I think that I also have a great passion for what I'm doing, and the children sense that. Through demonstration teaching, which is part of Suzuki teaching, I think that I can help them feel the music so much more than by just

*Continued on p. 36*

*Mary Craig Powell Interview, continued from p. 35*

asking them to read the notes and play the music. Through the listening they do, they absorb much of the feeling. I can't give 100 percent of that to each child, but I'm certain it comes through Suzuki teaching techniques and through my own passion and joy for the children and the music itself.



*It was very important to Dr. Suzuki—to remain young and to infuse enthusiasm for life and everyday life into everything that he did. How do you deal with that on a daily basis?*

I must say that teaching on a daily basis brings me to life, for the most part. Even when something is happening in my personal life that may be less than wonderful, it's when I teach that

I'm the happiest. I'm always glad to see the children. It's a passion with me; I'll always love it.

*What is it about Dr. Suzuki's legacy that speaks most clearly to you, or speaks most strongly?*

His love for children and his desire to bring music into their hearts, so that their lives could be filled with love rather than hatred. After the war, that was why he turned to this; he wanted to let the children of Japan have something beautiful to fill their hearts rather than the hatred of the world, and I adore the man for that.

*You are a significant part of the legacy, though. How does that responsibility affect you?*

I feel the responsibility, but it does not stress me. I want to give all I can to all

other teachers, and I have no ego about it. I just love to share.

*Dr. Suzuki had no ego in what he did. Is that part of why he was so appealing?*

Perhaps so. I think that he felt that the Method and the Philosophy should not just be just Suzuki; it should be Suzuki-Powell, or whatever person was working with it. I felt very much that he wanted us to carry on his legacy in our own way, the best that we could.

*What do you see coming up now in the younger generations? How excited are you about the younger teachers carrying on this legacy and this tradition?*

Oh, I very much hope that they will.

I feel that the revised International Suzuki Piano books will attract more teachers; I think we have improved the body of the literature greatly. To me, it feels like Dr. Suzuki must be smiling on us from heaven for having made those changes. Some people thought it was going against Suzuki, and again, I think he wanted it a Suzuki-Powell or Suzuki-whomever method, and he would want it to grow with new ideas. He always wanted a new idea. I think that this helps attract younger teachers, and the more young teachers can hear fine Suzuki Piano students play, the more attractive it will be to them, too.

*How does one thank Dr. Suzuki for this legacy?*

I try to thank Dr. Suzuki for his legacy by becoming a part of it, and doing my

*What interaction did you have with Dr. Suzuki?*

When I met Dr. Suzuki, he was quite old. I was teaching at the Pan-Pacific Conference in Australia when I first met him. He took a fall, tripped over a violin case that weekend, and so wasn't able to interact much, but I remember the first time I ever saw him—just in a crowd at Stevens Point—he was saying, "Children, they have a very wonderful mind, they're just short." I loved that. You've got to capture them in those little short moments. I must say, that it is something I have dedicated myself to—approaching my students at an almost graduate level in terms of my expectations because I have learned that children can do anything we want, and probably better than the rest of us, but they need to be treated in a child-like manner. I have worked to make the approach child-like.



ISA Piano Committee with Alfred editor E. L. Lancaster (far left)



Mary Craig's conference session on revised publications

part toward fulfilling his desire that music was for all children, and that we can fill them with something beautiful. I hope to help carry it out for him.

*Do you feel that you're in service to your students, in service to the world, using the Suzuki method?*

I certainly do. I think of myself as a leader with my students and with

other teachers, and I endorse Servant Leadership—I am there to serve their needs, and that's the kind of leadership that I hope to provide.

When you come to a conference like this, you just get so immersed in it. I've never seen a conference where everybody hugs each other quite as much. It's wonderful. I long for some other music organizations to have some of the

featured lectures that we have, especially those that endorse love for the child, and not just focusing on teaching the instrument. I actually think that you get far better results with your teaching of the instrument when you have reached the child's heart. It's just wonderful to be here. It's powerful. ●

## Learning Experiences with Mary Craig Powell



Mary Craig Powell's accomplishments are legendary throughout the international Suzuki Community and beyond. She represented the SAA on the International Suzuki Piano Committee with Seizo Azuma (Japan), Nada Brissenden (Pan Pacific Suzuki Association), and Kasia Borowiak (European Suzuki Association). Working with E.L. Lancaster (Alfred Music), the committee produced the much-needed New International Edition of the Suzuki Piano School (2008–2010).

Fifteen years ago, in 2002, the SAA awarded Mary Craig the Creating Learning Community Award for "Excellence in Suzuki Teacher Education." Her influence has continued to expand. The number of individual teachers Mary Craig has taught in our region alone has now reached 621 according to the SAA Registry. We asked a few teachers to share briefly their personal perspectives on Mary Craig Powell's pedagogy.

I feel very grateful for being able to learn from Mary Craig Powell, whom I respect and admire.

She is my role model for a Master Teacher: professional, first-rate musician, dedicated and creative teacher, and most importantly, a wonderful, caring human being.

I've learned a great deal from her interaction with parents at the lesson, how well she keeps them engaged, actively participating in a process. Being a respectful mentor to the parents, Mary Craig has been always specific, giving super clear directions. Here are some of my observations:

- Sit a parent closer to the piano (left side from the student) to observe the lesson and to be an active participant.
- Talk to a parent, sometimes directly, sometimes indirectly through a child.
- Be very specific in your assignments for homework (how many times to repeat, how to practice in steps, what metronome markings are, etc.).
- Be firm but kind.

- Make parents trust you in choosing a recital piece.
- Write a memo for yourself about student's repertoire and current homework.

These are only a few points from the wealth of information I retained from my learning from Mary Craig.

—Marina Obukovsky, SAA Teacher Trainer,  
Head of Piano Department,  
The School for Strings, NY

One of the many pedagogical gifts Mary Craig Powell has demonstrated and shared with me as a teacher has been the use of creativity and playfulness in teaching. I learned from her that teaching can be fun for students and for me. A stuffed animal can deliver both praise for a task well done and constructive criticism for how to accomplish a task more successfully. That animal can also make silly, humorous comments and totally engage a child in their lesson. What fun! Extra repetitions of skills can be accomplished by using just about

any object—shapes, cars, or little rubber animals. Engaging a child in creating detailed stories about pieces is another imaginative tool I would never have thought of prior to my study with Mary Craig. Her own creativity inspires me daily to continue trying new fun ways of introducing musical ideas or technique and to continue challenging myself to expect a lot from students without being too serious all the time.

Oh, and stickers... one can never have or give away too many stickers. Who would've thought of 20 stickers for a lesson? Thank you, Mary Craig.

—Gail Gebhart, SAA Teacher Trainer,  
studio teacher and faculty at  
Wayne State University, MI

I have been privileged and honored to know Mary Craig Powell and consider her to be one of the most important influences on my teaching career. Her knowledge of pianism and pedagogy is equally extraordinary at all levels of the

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*Learning Experiences, continued from p. 37*

Suzuki repertoire. One of Mary Craig's many gifts is the ability to dissect the most intricate details of the repertoire while still maintaining an element of simplicity when discussing the approach to teaching. One of the tenets of her teaching, which she revisited throughout the different books, was the idea of Demonstration, Imitation, and Verbalization. This is a concept which many Suzuki teachers are familiar with, but it was the succinctness and ease of her delivery which made an impact and impressed on me the extreme importance of this idea. The students hear and see the teacher modeling, after which they execute the concept themselves. It is only after these two steps are accomplished that the concept is verbalized for the parent and the child. This is one of the biggest differences between Suzuki piano teaching and traditional piano teaching. Mary Craig's simple and effective understanding of this basic teaching premise allows for the child to grasp and execute the concept in the quickest and most effective fashion. This is what we are all searching for as teachers, and my hope is that all of Mary Craig's trainees will continue to apply the many wonderful things she has imparted to all of us.

—Dr. Bret Serrin, Chair, Piano Department,  
Suzuki Music Institute of Dallas

In 1992, I entered Kerns Chapel at Capital University for my first Suzuki Piano teacher training course with Mary Craig Powell. I was instantly mesmerized by the Suzuki method, and by the end of the first day with Mary Craig, I was a convert. I have been fortunate to take several teacher training courses with her and to spend nine wonderful years as a Suzuki parent in her studio. I have applied many of Mary Craig's pedagogical concepts to my daily teaching. Of these, I feel that one of the most important is to always say something positive about students' playing before discussing what needs to be worked on in their practice. As I quietly listen to students playing their pieces, I am thinking not only of how to give them guidance for improvement, but also of what they executed well in



Left to right: Roxana del Barco, Roberta Centurion, Mary Craig Powell, Doris Koppelman at Festival in Lima, Peru, 1995

their playing. By following Mary Craig's example, I have learned that discussing the positives first makes students more receptive to hearing what in their pieces still needs extra attention.

When working with young students, I love using Mary Craig's technique of teaching through a stuffed animal. It's really perfect: I give the praise, and my studio frog, Carl, "tells" them what still needs improvement. As Mary Craig says of her frog, Fred, "He can say what I can't!" I'm proud and happy that Mary Craig has influenced my teaching. I am a better teacher today because of her many wonderful, insightful ideas.

—Judy Scurci, Suzuki Piano Teacher  
and Workshop Coordinator

What immediately appealed to me about Mary Craig Powell's teacher training in the early 1980s was her systematic, detailed, and unhurried way to present each teaching point. As I observed her teach her own students, I could see how they became complete virtuosic musicians using her brilliant pedagogy. These are some examples that have stayed with me through the years.

1. Use of mainstream piano technique, particularly "love notes": those special notes in pieces that require a flexible wrist roll to sink deeply into the note creating a fuller, rounded sound

2. Use of rainbow phrases and the physical gesture to turn a phrase
3. Use of "stop-prepare" to make instant dynamic changes
4. Marking a moving line inside a series of repeated notes, then carefully teaching weight balance to bring out a line
5. Her systematic approach to rhythmic and melodic reading creates a capable sight-reader.
6. She speaks to students in appealing analogies and metaphors that help them relate to dynamic changes and to the piece overall by developing imagery.
7. Her kind, respectful, and detailed instructions to parents serve as an ideal model for how to best engage them in the talent development of their child.

As a colleague and leader, she has mentored me through the years. I feel fortunate to have had her presence in my professional life. Her gracious, common-sense approach has shaped my teaching and will remain with me forever.

—Diana Galindo, SAA Teacher Trainer and  
studio teacher, Flagstaff, AZ

I'm sure you know the student. The one who loves to play fast. He can't wait to show that he can play it faster than the recording! I see the excitement on his face. I share his enthusiasm. I really want him to succeed! Then, he misses a

fingering and it all falls to pieces. I can see him deflate right in front of my eyes. That's the moment when I can hear Mary Craig Powell's gentle, eastern North Carolina accent in my head saying, "Let's put a Stop, Prepare right here."

I have known and trained with Mary Craig Powell for 27 years. I sat in her Piano 1A class at Capital University in the summer of 1990, totally skeptical about this Suzuki thing. I had just purchased a music school with Suzuki teachers, and although I was going to stick with my own "traditional" teaching, I knew I had to be able to "sell" the Suzuki Method to prospective parents. I was just there to learn about it. By lunchtime, as Mary Craig had predicted (how does she *know* these things?!), I had changed my auditor status to participant. The Suzuki Philosophy and Mary Craig Powell's teaching made sense, so I stopped and prepared to implement all that I was learning.

Stop, Prepare. It's a life changing teaching tool. One note of Twinkle theme to the next, one sudden change in dynamic, one eight-measure spot in a Brahms Intermezzo made of chords so full of notes that one wants to grow extra fingers—each of these spots can use a Stop, Prepare. From the very first lesson to a professional career: taking the time to stop, analyze the situation, figure out how to fix it, and then implement the fix is a positive and efficient way to succeed.

—Maryfrances Kirsh, Piano and Violin, Denison University Suzuki Program, OH

**H**ow do you describe pedagogical genius of Mary Craig in a few short paragraphs? Taking teacher training courses with Mary Craig, both at Institutes but especially in her home studio, was the pinnacle of my training. It is hard to pinpoint just a few of the things that settled in my heart but I will try.

Many years ago as a cheeky, young, freshly minted Suzuki teacher, I was taking a teacher training course and observing Mary Craig in a lesson with a student. It was one of my first encounters with Mary Craig, although I had heard a great deal about her already. Having observed a few lessons before, I

noticed that she was a very positive teacher. She first pointed to all the things that were very good in student's playing, then slowly worked her way to things she wanted to fix.

Then in a Book Three masterclass a student had just finished playing and . . . it was truly not good. As the student was painfully working her way through Clementi, I tried to follow Mary Craig's example to find *something* positive about this performance, and I was failing miserably. I was thinking "Well, let's see what *positive* things will Ms. Powell find in *that* playing?" I could tell from the faces of other trainees that they were having similar thoughts. After the student stopped playing we all held our breaths. Mary Craig smiled her beautiful smile, looked at the student as if she was the most important person in the world and said, "Myyyy, I can tell you really love this piece!" The student vigorously nodded her head, and we all smiled and exhaled."

When she works with a student, it seems as if there is nothing more important to her than being there in the moment with each student. She always



Greetings from Japanese Girl Scouts at World Convention.

maintains eye contact with the students while speaking to them and has an incredible gift of holding and maintaining their attention. I have seen students, including my seven-year-old daughter, staring at Mary Craig with complete love in their faces.

To Mary Craig, every student has potential, every student is cherished, and every effort, no matter how feeble, is to be applauded and celebrated. She truly is a Pied Piper of Suzuki Piano. Thank you!

—Malgosia Lis, Suzuki Piano Coordinator,  
The Hartt School Community Division,  
University of Hartford

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Mary Craig Powell with teachers at Suzuki Music Columbus, 2001

## From CSI to CSO and Back: One Family's Suzuki Journey

By Julie Basrak

Our family's musical journey began in September 1980 when our first child, Cathy, began Suzuki violin lessons at the age of three. Why did we subject a three-year-old to weekly violin lessons and (relatively) long minutes of practice?

The previous spring Cathy heard a recording of a violin and was interested. We talked a little bit about a violin and took her to a music store that rented the tiny violins so she could see and hold one. From that point on, she would identify a violin whenever she heard one playing. Her continued interest prompted us to consider violin lessons. Our goals for her were that she would enjoy music and develop self-discipline.

Those "long" minutes of practice were initially about five minutes, three times a day. (We had been told that Dr. Suzuki said one should practice whenever one ate or drink. As we progressed with lessons and I read more about Dr. Suzuki and his method, it became evident that his admonition was that students should practice only on the days they ate.)

By the summer of 1981, our second child, Karen, would pick up Cathy's violin when Cathy returned it to her case after a practice session. Karen would move the bow on the strings the way she saw her big sister do it. When we paid close attention to what Karen was doing, we realized that she was bowing on the correct strings to play Twinkle. She just didn't know how to get the correct pitches by placing her fingers on the strings. As teachers, we recognized the "teachable moment" and considered the options. So, in September of 1981, Karen began Suzuki violin lessons.

In the spring semester of 1983 a cello teacher was added to the faculty of the school where the girls were taking lessons. Both girls expressed an interest. We solicited advice from teachers and friends. Our decision was primarily based on the fact that Karen, having started lessons a year after Cathy, had not progressed as far as Cathy had. Thus began Karen's introduction to the cello. She actually began taking Suzuki cello lessons with Adele O'Dwyer while continuing her violin lessons. By the end of the semester, Karen had become a "cello convert."

The year Karen was in kindergarten she began studying cello with Gilda Barston at the Music Center of the North Shore (now Music Institute of Chicago). The following spring (1985) at a parent meeting, Gilda asked for volunteers to help her begin the Chicago Suzuki Institute. I gamely volunteered my husband and myself. Our approach to this endeavor mirrored the Suzuki philosophy.

I attended their lessons, took notes, and kept an eye and an ear on their practicing throughout their Suzuki years. As a family, we tried to follow through with assignments and advice given by their teachers. Throughout the years, we attended CSI and "Stevens Point" (the American Suzuki Institute) with the girls and marveled at all of the extraordinary teachers they were privileged to work with!

Cathy continued her violin studies with Enid Cleary until she was in sixth grade. She then began studying with Almita Vamos, and a year or two later added lessons with Roland Vamos. They were her teachers through high school and her first year of college.

Karen continued her cello lessons with Gilda Barston all the way through high school. While in high school, she also began studying with Richard Hirschl, a cellist in the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

After completing their undergraduate degrees, both girls chose to become members of an orchestra. Cathy was hired by the Boston Symphony, which has become her musical home. Karen started with the Fort Worth Symphony and is now a member of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

We have now come full circle. After watching our granddaughters begin music lessons, I decided it was my turn. In November of 2011, I began my own Suzuki cello lessons with our daughter's former teacher, Gilda Barston. Gilda expected me to do what all of her students did, including

playing on performance classes and her annual studio recital (music memorized, of course), making a recording of each book as I progressed, and participating in the Mid-Winter Cello Festival and the Chicago Suzuki Institute. It was a blessing to be able to study with Gilda for five years after having been a Suzuki parent. I am now fortunate to be studying with one of Gilda's former cello students, Julia Wen.

Our Suzuki journey continues, as I see no reason quit taking cello lessons, especially since I can now play chamber music and in an orchestra. More than 36 years ago we could not have envisioned how Suzuki would change our lives, nor could we have predicted how many amazing and wonderful friends our daughters—and we—would make along the way! ••

**Julie Basrak**, a retired elementary school and special education teacher, began her Suzuki journey as the mother of two Suzuki students. With them and her husband Roger, she attended many Suzuki Institutes. Hundreds of lessons later, the inspiration from listening to cello choir performances convinced her that it was now her turn to take up the cello. In Nov. 2011 (27 years after her daughter Karen's first lesson with Gilda Barston) Julie had her first cello lesson with Gilda.



# Persevering to the Breakthrough Moment

*"It doesn't matter how slowly you go, as long as you do not stop." – Shinichi Suzuki*

*By Alisa Bruza*



Eventually, a solution appeared, as it was bound to appear when boredom overtakes but the resolve to continue persists. The human brain can only take so much before it resorts to its unlimited potential. The solution came from a collaboration between my husband and TL's teacher, who got her to play the two "songs" she knew before she was done and retreated to her regular spot under the chair. By now, TL's bow holds were beautiful and technically correct for her age. Her Variation A rhythm and bow direction were accurate. The only thing she was lacking was the repertoire that involves only the violin's open strings,

My five-year-old daughter, TL, has a favorite Blue Jello card. It's number 1-23, rest blue pineapple jello-jello. My husband and I know this because the other thing that qualifies her is that she does not want to play the violin. So, in addition to playing the instrument, my husband, her Suzuki parent, uses the theory games to establish the daily practice routine, sometimes as a reward for playing, but more often as an introduction to playing. Every time they practice, they go through at least 30 Blue Jello cards from Music Mind Games by Michiko Yurko, which our Suzuki program uses to teach the kids music theory. One time, when I practiced with her, I pointed to a card and said, "Look, a whole rest," and she said, "Mom, that's the wrong side." Sure thing, the card's number was 1-40 and I should have been looking at its 1-19 side.

Consequently, TL can play very few things on the violin. This is logical. Not practicing actual violin playing will result in limited or no repertoire. Endless weeks on box violin, followed

by an entire year of playing six notes of Variation A rhythm on the E string make for a numbing experience, especially for a child who craves stimulation the way she does. Her teachers needed her to focus on posture and all the techniques that make the violin playing good.

TL is in her second year of Suzuki violin and is probably what I heard euphemistically called a "spirited child" (according to author Mary Sheedy Kurcinka, spirited children are "more" than other kids, usually in the direction that presents problems to parents: quick to anger, particular, sensitive, ultra-observant, stubborn, etc.). We, TL's parents, teeter on the edge of quitting the violin altogether. Gymnastic or dance class would make our lives easier logistically (we have three kids in Suzuki) as well as cut out our violin practice-induced frustration, which is significant and certainly not the only factor in our parenting crucible. But we didn't and won't give up. We decided to trust what we read about the Suzuki method and to trust her teachers.

notes E A D and G. My husband got her to come out from under the chair by showing her the Blue Jello cards, his proven tool to incite interest. And, as the teacher's violin was right there, she started playing the rhythms on the E string and motioned to TL to pick up hers. And she did, she assumed the perfect play position and ripped through the Blue Jello rhythms she knew so well, correcting herself as she made mistakes and enjoying her mastery. All of the last two years came together in an incredibly satisfying resolution. ••



**Alisa Bruza** writes and posts her revelations, anecdotes, and poems on Medium.com. She is a mother of three Suzuki Method children and, since becoming one, has learned to play the cello through the end of Suzuki Book One. Alisa lives and works in Brooklyn.

From the Archives

## One Thing at a Time, Please

By Mary Craig Powell

This article originally appeared in *American Suzuki Journal* 26, no. 3.

A number of years ago, I began teaching Suzuki piano to a five-year-old boy by the name of Joshua. He progressed beautifully in his playing skills and he and his mother were thrilled and excited about playing the piano. In fact, his mother was so pleased that she asked if I could also take her older daughter who was studying traditional piano at the time. I responded that I was sorry but I had no openings for more students and saw no hope of taking her for some time. As a result, Joshua's mother found another Suzuki teacher who could take both of her children; in fact, she could take them on the same afternoon of the week and give them adjacent lessons. When Joshua's mother told me her decision, I understood completely why she chose to make this change. In fact, I was quite pleased because I had trained the young teacher she chose and had found her to possess the qualities I felt a Suzuki teacher needed—she was musical, her playing skills were excellent, she had a solid background in music, she was intelligent,

and she possessed the warm, nurturing personality that I feel a Suzuki teacher needs. Thus, Joshua and his mom left my studio with my blessings.

About a year passed before I heard any word from them. At that point, I received a letter from Joshua's mother stating that if I would take Joshua back as a student she would be most grateful. She explained that Joshua no longer wanted to play the piano even though the young teacher was everything I had described her to be. The problem was that the teacher asked Joshua for too many things at once, leaving him frustrated and in tears each week. For example, she would ask Joshua to correct his fingering on a piece; while he was repeating the piece to correct this problem, she would remind him to watch his posture, then his dynamics, then his balance between hands, etc.

Do you hear yourself in this story? Whether you are a parent or a teacher, I suspect you do. I know I do. As a parent

of two boys who studied Suzuki violin, I know that I must have made this same mistake repeatedly with my sons when we practiced simply because I was conscientious and wanted them to do everything well; no wonder they did not want to practice at times! As a Suzuki teacher, I have dedicated myself to learning to work on only one thing at a time (this is often referred to as a one-point-focus). While I am far from being perfect at this skill, my years of experience in teaching in this manner have increased my ability and explain why Joshua felt more comfortable and relaxed with me than he did with his less experienced teacher.

In Japan, Suzuki teachers sometimes give what they call "one-point-lessons." In this kind of lesson, only one idea (such as beautiful tone, good bow arm, etc.) is stressed for the entire lesson. A one-point-focus does not have to imply that an entire lesson or practice be devoted to one idea, however. It can simply mean that we work on only one thing at a time. There might be five points that need to be covered about a particular passage, but the teacher or parent must bite her lips and zip up her gums if necessary and ask for only one of them at a time. After repeating a passage several times working on that point, there is nothing wrong with repeating the same passage to work on a different point. In fact, once the child has improved both points, it is fine to suggest that he try combining both points, and eventually, all the points needed. None of us can easily think of more than one new idea at a time, so it seems only a kindness to practice in this manner.

There are countless areas in which this one-point-focus can be applied both in the home practice and in the teaching studio. Here are some of the possibilities:



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## Review

The purpose of review is to either strengthen present skills or to build new ones. Sometimes, however, it is easy for the child and parent to lapse into meaningless and mindless review. This happens easily if there is no special focus given the child as he plays. Assigning a one-point-focus for the week on the review pieces is certainly a concrete way teachers and parents can help guide the review so that it leads toward constructive results. Sometimes a one-point-focus can be given on part of the review pieces while a different focus is given to others during a week's practice.

## New Pieces

New pieces certainly contain more than one skill to be learned. However, once again, going after one of these skills at a time will get us there faster and with less frustration than trying to do too many steps at once. The teacher can structure the assignment for the home practice to lead toward this kind of careful, productive work.

## Reading Pieces

The main reason that learning to read music is difficult is that it combines many steps and skills that have to be done simultaneously. To name a few, a beginning reader must read the correct fingering, rhythm, notes, and articulations at the same time. Breaking these areas into one-point- focuses brings excellent results and is less stressful for the student. For example, the rhythm can be tapped first. Next, the score can be studied for the direction of the notes (stepping up, skipping down, etc.). In like manner, all other aspects are studied and discussed before playing. Once this is done, the score should not seem as overwhelming for the child to play.



In addition to her work as a Suzuki Teacher Trainer and instructor of children of all ages, **Mary Craig Powell** has taught piano at both the college and preparatory levels. She is author of the book *Focus on Suzuki Piano* and contributor to *Teaching Suzuki Piano*. Currently she serves as the co-chair of the ISA Piano Committee. In recognition of her contribution to Suzuki instruction, she has received the Excellence in Teaching award and the Excellence in Suzuki Teacher Education award from the SAA as well as the Distinguished Alumna award from East Carolina University. As an active member of MTNA, she has been named the State Certified Piano Teacher of the Year by the Ohio Music Teachers' Association. In fall, 2013 she was featured for her teaching of Suzuki Method through an interview in *Clavier Companion*.

## Technic Studies

Any additional work that a teacher assigns is best broken into small steps, with a specific focus given to each step. Scales, for example, need a focus on correct fingering, another on preventing the arm and hand from twisting, etc. This careful, one-point-at-a-time work fosters success.

## Conclusion

The use of the one-point focus both in the teaching studio and in the home practice makes it possible to ask for many skills without the high frustration level that can potentially accompany

*Continued on p.55*



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## The Declaration of Finger Independence

By Sanchie Bobrow

### The Unanimous Declaration of the Four Fingers of the United Left Hand of the Violinist

*When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for four fingers to dissolve the bands which have connected them with each other, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature entitle them, a decent respect for the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.*

*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all fingers are created equal.*

Yes, the “fab four” can make beautiful music together and do their own thing at the same time. But how they may cling to one another! Their resistance to stand on their own four “feet” so to speak, is undeniable. If we don’t instill a sense of individuality in each finger early on, we will still be seeing all three fingers plop down as a unit on the D string in the beginning phrases of Etude, Hunter’s Chorus, The Two Grenadiers and (oh no, still!) in the opening phrases of Vivaldi’s Concerto in A minor. If we don’t strengthen 4th finger from the start, it may end up piggyback riding on top of 3rd finger, or drooping below the fingerboard every time 3rd finger is placed.

So, let’s talk about how we get our young students’ little fingers to find the correct pitches without the help of their left hand buddies, right from the start while we are preparing for Twinkle.

**Identify the fingers:** At the earliest lessons, write numbers on the cushy part of each finger on each hand. Thumb can have a smiley face. Touch the tip of each finger, identified by its number, with the tip of thumb. Make a nice round circle, like spectacles, with the fingers.

**Finger Pops!** Make a circle by touching thumb and the tip of each curved finger. Sing the “bread” section of each variation while tapping the designated finger and thumb to the rhythm of the chosen variation. Change rhythm for each finger. Since there are five rhythms now, one of the fingers gets a bonus. Clap and sing Twinkle Theme after all the fingers have done their “popping.”

**Finger tapping:** Set the left hand on the body of the “box” violin or wood violin, next to the fingerboard, with thumb underneath and straight. Wrist is straight and fingers are nicely curved. Tap each finger 5 or 10 times, maintaining a nice hand and finger position. Third finger will have to work a little harder and may

need some assistance, so I will often lift little fingers and help them tap if necessary.

**Left hand pizzicato:** Yes, at the Pre-Twinkle stage! Place left hand thumb in the curve of the neck (of the “real” violin, this obviously won’t work with the “box” violin) with the hand supported against the shoulder of the instrument. Guide a nicely curved first finger to touch the E string and pluck each Twinkle rhythm with a clear and strong ringing tone. Repeat with each finger. When the student is comfortable with this exercise on the E string, move it over to the A, D and G strings as well. This not only strengthens the fingers, but shapes the left hand in preparation for placing the fingers on the fingerboard. Kids love this exercise. It’s fancy!

Needless to say, but I will say it anyway, setting the left hand position carefully from the start will assure that its fingers will build technique with greater facility than a hand that has tension and postural issues.

### Let’s talk about Twinkle...

**Independent 3rd finger:** Much can be done at the early stages to allow 3rd finger to work independently. Here is a simple exercise to prepare 3rd finger for descending A Major scales and the descending lines in Twinkle from the E to A strings. Using “Taka” rhythm, play open E string. Stop and leave the bow on the E string. Place a nicely curved 3rd finger on the A string. Set the bow on the A string and play “Taka” rhythm on 3rd finger. Repeat (repeat, repeat, repeat, repeat).

**Using independent 3rd finger:** Once the open string one octave A Major scale is comfortably achieved, placing 3rd finger independently on the A string in the descending scale can be introduced.

Now that we have given 3rd finger its opportunity to stand alone, we can offer 2nd finger the same opportunity as we prepare to play the first three notes of Lightly Row.

**2nd finger tunnel over the E string:** Many teachers wait to introduce this concept until O Come, Little Children, and I suggest looking at each student and gauging whether the left hand is ready at this point. If so, have the student place a nicely curved 2nd finger on the A string. Be sure not to touch the E string. Pluck the open E string and imagine that a train is traveling under the tunnel. Choo choooooo!

Once this is achieved, the child can pluck the opening three notes of **Lightly Row**, starting with the 2nd finger already set. If the child is not ready to make a sturdy tunnel, practice 2nd finger taps on the E string with a nice hand position and curved 2nd finger.

**A Major Arpeggio:** Now that the student is able to use 2nd and 3rd fingers independently, she can play a one-octave A Major arpeggio, beginning on the open A string. I suggest starting out

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## *Finger Independence, continued from p. 44*

with “Taka” rhythm on each note and pausing between each rhythm to set the next finger and/or tilt the bow.

**Song of the Wind** presents a new skill that must be prepared ahead of learning the piece: the placement of the 3rd finger on the A string coming from the anchored 1st finger on the E string.

**3rd finger bouncing:** This is a left-hand only exercise. Place 1st finger on the E string and leave it down. Place 3rd finger on the A string (if there are tapes on the child’s instrument, those are an excellent guide) and bounce the finger from the A to the E, back and forth across the strings a given number of times. This concept returns in *Minuet 2*, *Happy Farmer*, *Hunters’ Chorus*, *Waltz*, *Two Grenadiers* and the *Trio of Minuet in G*.

The student’s left hand settles very nicely into **Go Tell Aunt Rhody** and **O Come Little Children**, which reinforce independent 2nd and 3rd fingers coming from the open E string. 2nd finger tunnels over the E string and the independent fingers of the A Major arpeggio. Some teachers opt to introduce the 4th finger in *O Come, Little Children*.

**Spider Walk:** 3rds on one string. 0202 1313 2424 1313 0202. This can be used as preparation for the 3rds in *May Song* and also for the 3rd section of *Perpetual Motion*.

**May Song** reinforces the A Major arpeggio (bars 1 and 9) as well as the concept of placing 3rd finger while 1st finger remains anchored (bars 2 and 10). It also presents an opportunity to use 4th finger from an anchored 2nd finger in bars 6 and 8. The interval of 3rds can be prepared ahead of time.

Lovely **Long Long Ago** offers more opportunities to reinforce skills already learned in previous pieces and gently introduces variations on some of those skills. Bars 2-3, 6-7 and 14-15 reinforces the approach to 4th finger from an anchored 2nd finger on the A string. In bars 9-10 and 11-12, the interval of a 7th across the D to the A strings gives independent 3rd finger a new approach from the anchored 1st finger on the D string. 4th finger also has a new option in bars 9 and 11, of substituting for the open E string. All of that finger

tapping that was introduced back in the Pre-Twinkle stage will pay off here!

My students love to play **Allegro!** A relatively quick learn, this piece is fun and packed with many great skills. Let’s stay on topic and address the left hand fingers. 3rd finger is a star in *Allegro*. It starts off tall and independent on the E string and is re-set two more times at the beginning of lines 2 and 4. Be sure that 3rd finger is curved and in tune before starting to play. It must have a clear ringing tone! *Allegro* also introduces the concept of one finger lifting as another goes down in bars 2, 6, 11 and 14. This technique will be revisited in **Perpetual Motion**, **Minuet 1**, and the **Gavotte by Gossec**.

**Finger exercise:** Before beginning to teach *Allegro*, prepare the 2nd finger to lift as 3rd goes down by plucking 1 2 3 (2 pops up when 3 goes down) 1, on the E string. 1st finger must remain anchored.

While **Perpetual Motion** builds strength and stamina in both the left hand and bow arm, it is a great reinforcer for many of the finger techniques learned so far. The descending A Major scale gets a great workout and the 3rd finger gets extra practice starting a phrase independently on the E string. Since the interval of a third is prevalent in this piece, it’s a good idea to review the Spider Walk exercise which we used to prepare for *May Song*.

*Perpetual Motion* played in D Major and the one octave D Major scale can be very helpful in preparing the left hand for the upcoming D Major pieces. Practice the the Spider Walk starting on the D string as well.

We can also try a tricky little trick which relates to the 2nd finger popping up when 3rd finger goes down in *Allegro*.

**Finger exercise:** Prepare the 3rd finger to lift when 4th finger goes down in the first and second beats of bar 2. On the A string, pluck, 2 3 4 (3 pops up when 4 goes down) 2. 2nd finger must remain anchored.

After much preparation, with one octave D Major scales and arpeggios and transposition of earlier Book One pieces to the key of D Major, we reach our first piece in the key of D Major, **Allegretto**. Rich with 3rds, this piece gives fingers many opportunities to

work independently, often from a finger that is already down. This reinforces our Spider Walk exercise. Students are also given an opportunity to use an independent 4th finger in bars 2, 6 and 14, coming from the open A string. This is a good opportunity to teach the concept of unisons, which will return in many upcoming pieces such as *Chorus from Judas Maccabaeus*, *Musette*, *Bourree*, *The Two Grenadiers*, *Witches’ Dance*, *Lully Gavotte* and *Gavotte in G minor*. And, we introduce first finger to the G string with a little hop across the strings.

At this point, it’s a very good idea to start freeing 2nd finger to move between its “high” and “low” positions.

**Exercise:** This is a silent finger exercise. With 1st and 3rd fingers anchored on the A string, slowly bounce 2nd finger from C sharp, touching 3rd finger, to C natural, touching 2nd finger. Repeat a given number of times. Be careful to observe the student’s left hand and wrist position as the 2nd finger moves back to touch 1st finger.

**Andantino** is a “relaxer” piece which reinforces the 3rd finger placement on the A string from an anchored 1st finger on the E string, first encountered in *Song of the Wind*. 4th finger also has an opportunity to work independently on the A string in measure 11.



**Etude**, our first piece in G Major, gives the student the opportunity to use the low 2nd finger patterns on the A and E strings. Prepare for this way ahead of time by teaching the two octave G Major scale. High second finger on G and D, low second finger on A and E! Also, prepare with the 9-note G Major Tonalization for 3rd fingers moving independently and in tune across the strings. There are plenty of opportunities for 3rd finger to work independently on the D string.

**Minuet 1** offers the student a first piece that uses low and high 2nd finger on the same string. Prepare ahead for bars 15-17 where sharp 2nd finger pops up when 3rd finger goes down to prepare for the low 2nd finger, C natural, in bar 17. This also helps prepare for the twisty finger spot in measure 20 of *Gossec Gavotte*. This concept returns in the *Trio of Minuet in G* at the end of Book Two.

4th finger gets some time to shine in Minuet 1. Preview the placement of 4th and low 2nd fingers coming from an anchored 3rd finger in bars 5-6 and 13-14. 2nd finger must find its pitch coming from 4th finger, without the assistance of 1st finger. Also, in bar 9, beware of the intonation of independent 4th finger coming from an anchored 1st finger on the A string. This spot prepares the hand for the placement of D#, high 3rd finger, in measures 23-24 of Minuet 2.

**Exercise:** To assist the student to gauge the relationship between the notes in these passages, teach the first 14 notes of Frere Jacques starting on the open A string.

One more spot! In bar 2, see if first finger can remain down on the A string while 3rd finger is placed on the D string. This is also preparation for thirds across the strings.

A landmark piece in the repertoire, **Minuet 2** expands the student's technical abilities in many ways for both left and right hands. Let's consider those left hand fingers. The opening phrase *needs* preparation. Even though the basic G Major Tonalization has been removed from the revised version of Book One and replaced with a two octave G Major arpeggio, I still teach the Tonalization along with the two-octave G Major scale before starting Etude. Using the rhythm from Twinkle Variation I on each note, prepare with G Major Tonalization. In the opening four notes of the minuet, leave 1st finger down on the A string until the open A that follows 2nd finger on the E string. Make sure to reinforce independent use of the 3rd finger across the strings.

In bar 2, 3rd finger reaches over the A string to the D string from 2nd finger on the E string, thus securing its independence.

Minuet 2 also introduces a new note, D#, and a new finger pattern on the A string. The D# must be placed independent of 2nd finger.



#### Finger Exercises:

B C# D# E BD# E BED# BD# E D# Open E  
1 2 3 4 1 3 4 1 4 3 1 3 4 3 0

While **Minuet 3** is a big stretcher piece for the bow, with its integration of

smooth slurs into the fabric of the melody, it is mainly a reinforcer of previously acquired left hand skills. The placement of 4th finger coming from 3rd finger on the D string in bars 16 to 17 is a new skill, building on the Major 6ths across the strings previously learned in Minuet 1. The Major 3rd between the B and G on the E string in bar 17 is often out of tune. This interval between 4th and low 2nd finger must be carefully prepared ahead of time. The Spider Walk can be reviewed here, using the low second finger pattern (see May Song).

**The Happy Farmer** also reinforces many left hand techniques, including hopping 3rd and 2nd fingers across the strings and the use of independent 3rd finger with an anchored 1st finger.

The culminating piece of Book One (hooray!), the **Gavotte** by Gossec, adds new skills while building upon and reinforcing previously learned techniques. At this point, students should have attained enough technique to easily anchor one finger and place another a third or fourth above the anchored note, to use 2nd and 3rd fingers in their "high" and "low" positions without the assistance of other fingers and to place fingers independently from anchored fingers across the strings or from open strings. Preparation for the Gavotte's new challenges can begin as early as Minuet 2 or Minuet 1, depending on the student's learning style. The exercises that are presented on page 44 of the revised Book One are excellent for preparing several tricky spots for the left hand.

The left hand is introduced to a new note, C#, extended 3rd finger on the G string. This needs to be prepared ahead of time, especially since the C# crosses over from the anchored 1st finger on the D string, building upon the placement

of the 1st to 3rd finger in the Major 3rd across strings, first introduced in Song of the Wind and reinforced in Andantino, Etude, Minuet 1, Minuet 3 and The Happy Farmer.

Another new left hand skill is the octave between the 1st and 4th fingers in measure 21. The 4th finger should be placed on the A string with the 1st finger anchored on the D string, thus strengthening the octave hand frame. This technique will come in handy later in Book Two for the octaves in the Minuet by Boccherini.

The release of the high 2nd finger when 3rd finger goes down is not a new skill. But, moving the high 2nd finger, C#, back to the low position, C natural (measure 20), once it releases is very new and should be prepared in stages. First, by plucking the first four notes to teach the 2nd finger to pop up when the 3rd finger goes down. Then add each note that follows, one at a time, being very careful to place the C natural next to the anchored 1st finger. Indeed, 2nd finger is relying on 1st finger here, but we are still reinforcing the concept that 2nd finger is able to move independently from the high to the low position. The bow should be added as stop bow slurs at first, then 2-note smooth slurs and finally 4-note smooth slurs. The bowing can also be learned in quick groups of 4 notes, then 5, 6, 7 and 8.

The placement of the 3rd finger on the D string, coming from the second finger on the E string is reinforced, as well as the placement of the 3rd finger from an anchored 1st finger.

The fingers of the left hand should move freely and easily in the sixteenth note slurs in the third and fourth sections of the piece. Fingers should never

*Continued on p. 60*



**Sanchie Bobrow** has been a member of the violin faculty of the School for Strings in New York City since 1989. She is the director of the Mighty String Demons, an ensemble of young violinists who perform at libraries, senior homes, hospitals and charity events in their Staten Island community. The motivation for this article came from Christie Felsing's Revisiting Book One teacher workshop at the Hartt Suzuki Institute, in which she asked participants to write a paper tracing a left hand concept in its development in Book One, and show how the concept reappears in the repertoire of Book Two. Many thanks to Christie for her input and inspiration. Thanks also to Allen Lieb, who read my paper from Christie's workshop and said, "Turn it into an article and submit it to the SAA Journal!"

## So you want to plan a tour?

By Erika Lord-Castillo with Allison Woerner



We have already explained *why* we tour. If you have not yet read it, please go back to the last issue of the journal and read our article, “Nurturing a Love of Differences, and Commonalities: a Tour Group adventure through the Baltics,” about our Southern Illinois University Edwardsville Suzuki Program 2016 Baltics tour and why we choose to take our students on an international tour every two years. There really is no better way to help our students learn to love the world outside our own than to show it to them—and we have no comparable way to express that love than through music and helping introduce citizens of far-away countries to Suzuki’s vision and purpose.

This follow-up article will explain the *how* of a tour. Our planning starts long in advance and requires detailed record keeping and a clear vision of the end goal. We hope we can help teachers who want to start touring to find the endeavor a bit less daunting through sharing how we get ready for our tours.

After nine international tours and some lessons learned along the way, tours are much easier with a strong parent volunteer group, fundraising, a delegation of responsibility, and clear communication.

Before worrying about the specifics of any tour, there are some essential decisions to be made that will affect any trip planning.

**What type of group are you taking?** Instrumentation, ages of travelers, and number of travelers all should be considered. We only travel with violinists and violists. If we were to bring cellists, they would need to either rent instruments or pay for the safe transit of their cellos on the plane with us.

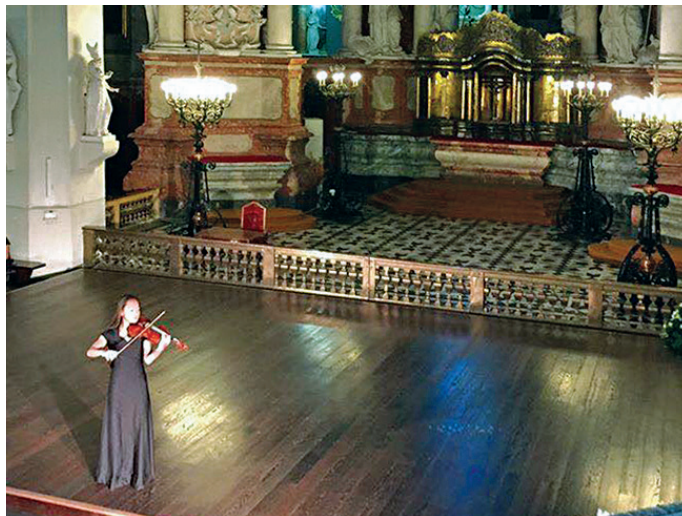
Our group in 2016 included 23 students, ranging in age from thirteen to eighteen. Our youngest students’ parents traveled with us as chaperones. We had 14 parent chaperones, so our ratio of chaperone to student was basically two students per adult. This went a long way to ease our minds when walking in crowded cities.

**When will your tour take place?** We choose to do our tour in June, as soon as Edwardsville High School ends for the summer. It is a peak travel time in the summer, but we need to take our trips when the students are not in school. Because we keep our tour at the same time every year, our families begin to expect it and can plan for it well in advance.

Once you know who you are taking and approximately when, you can start to plan your specific tour.

**Where to go?** The Tour Group directors, Allison Woerner and Erika Lord-Castillo, and program director, Vera McCoy-Sulentica,

discussed options of places to visit, taking into account where we had been recently, if any students still in the group had already visited a location, and where we knew students and families would be interested to go. For this particular Baltics tour, we were taking along a large group of graduating seniors who had been on tours before. Since they were experienced travelers, we thought we could opt for a more exotic destination than we might try with a group of less experienced travelers.



**Consider cost when choosing a destination, and be flexible.** We estimated how many students and parents we thought might travel and asked for cost estimates from our tour company for a range of destinations we thought we would like to consider. A tour company price includes a guide, bus driver, bus, and available travel insurance, all of which are important aspects to consider when you think about using a tour company versus arranging a trip yourself.

From past experience, we had found that eight to nine days was a good length for our trips. Shorter than this, and it is not worth all the travel; longer than this, and the students begin to get exhausted! Our tour company gave us estimates per traveler for each destination, which are connected to how many people travel and get slightly cheaper if more people participate. The tour cost for our two tour group directors and our accompanist is complimentary and is worked into the cost of the paying travelers, since we are working the entire trip and long before hand. This particular trip ended up with a price of approximately \$3500 per paying traveler. The amount varied if a traveler flew separately from our group, as was the case with one family who left early for a family vacation and then met us there, if a traveler used frequent flier miles, or if a traveler wanted a single room.

Our tour company, Music Celebrations International, suggested we consider the Baltic countries of Latvia,

Lithuania, and Estonia because of the price and reports of excellent audiences. We were not disappointed! Our audiences in the Baltics were huge and supportive at each venue, and enormously welcoming. Over the years we have learned that insisting on thorough concert promotion is a necessity. Though you might consider it a given, not all tour companies make this a priority.

Our own investigations showed these countries to be hidden gems, beautiful and rich in culture and history, as well as a young but enthusiastic Suzuki presence. Through the wonders of social media, we connected with the Suzuki association there, Rima Svegsdaite and the Suzuki program at the Karolines Music School in Vilnius, Lithuania, and hatched the idea for a massive joint concert. Please see our previous article for all of our amazing stories about this experience.

**Present the trip to your families.** We asked MCI to flesh out rough details and potential activities we could do on the trip. When we found we were very excited about the plan, we mailed them our refundable deposit to secure the trip for the program. Because of our standing relationship from previous tours with MCI, we did not communicate with other tour companies about our tour this year, but if you are embarking on your first tour, we definitely recommend asking for quotes from multiple tour companies! Be flexible in your destination, amenities, trip length, and sight-seeing. Then narrow your options down to three

or four choices and present these to your parent group to decide which option holds the most interest for your students and families. Without their support a tour definitely will not happen.

In September 2015, we offered this trip to our Tour Group parents at a meeting. At this point, we also presented them with the fundraising totals they had individually earned up until this point. Because our tours are a biennial event, as soon as students enter Tour Group, they begin building their

own fundraising accounts. We keep this money for the students, reserved for these trips. Parents know a trip opportunity will come up every two years; the question for them is where the trip will go and how much it will cost.

**Get commitment.** After we offered the trip to the parents, they had about a month to decide if their child would participate. A non-refundable deposit, accompanied by a registration form from each traveler, was required by mid-October which helped us lock in the number of people who would be traveling and thus know the true cost of the trip.

**Director responsibilities.** Planning a tour is a *huge* job. We choose to divide and conquer our many tasks. Because we have two directors, we divide our roles logistically and musically. We do also often overlap, like when deciding rooming arrangements and anything that is easier with two brains instead of only one. Most of the time, though, one of us—Erika in this case—takes care of all of the organizational work, travel logistics, and communication with our families, while the other—Allison—focuses on music, programming, rehearsing, and contact and coordination with the local groups we will perform with. We have found this to be an equitable division of labor for a job that would overwhelm either one of us on our own. Needless to say, we communicate between the two of us constantly.

*Continued on p. 50*

*Plan a Tour, continued from p. 49*

**Fundraising.** A tour cannot happen without money. \$3500 is a lot to earn! For the next few months, families made their monthly payments to the tour company and got passports in order. Our tour company gave us the option of collecting the payments ourselves and sending them in one mass payment together, or having our families pay directly to the company, which allowed them to make payments either by check or with a credit card, online. We chose the latter option, even though it did cost very slightly more, because of the ease for the families to pay with credit cards, and because it saved us a huge amount of effort tracking down the payments from each family before the deadlines. We still helped out with reminders

about the payments, but it was a relief for us as directors to not be personally responsible for rounding up the payments.

Our fundraising is managed by our Tour Group parents. We run a variety of fundraisers, from playing holiday tunes at our local Culver's restaurant, who gives us a percent of the proceeds they earn while we play, to selling scrip, poinsettias, and frozen pizzas. Our two largest fundraisers are our Suzuki Workshop, which we host every two years, and our Trivia Night, which we host in the winter prior to each tour. During Workshop, our Tour Group families are in charge of making and serving the lunches to the participants of the workshop. Parents also run a fun silent auction that helps make the workshop more than just an educational event and more of a social happening. Proceeds from Workshop tend to run about \$5000.

At a trivia night, participants put together a table of friends and family and compete against other tables to see who knows the most trivia. Our trivia night includes snacks, a silent auction of donated items, and performances by our Tour Group. Families can choose how involved they would like to be, earning



more or less money depending on how much work they put in. Trivia nights are a very popular fundraiser in the St. Louis area and tend to add about \$9000 to our funds for the tour.

**Time to rehearse.** Once our trivia night passed, the time began to seem like it was moving very quickly toward the trip! Summer started, and tour rehearsals began, held at the time on Saturdays when we hold our group classes throughout the year. Students already have this time set aside and hopefully working the rehearsals into their busy schedules will not be a problem. We book a farewell concert at a local church so we can have a dry run of the tour repertoire before we go.

**Pre-Trip Meeting.** About a month before we left, Erika ran a required meeting for parents and students. At this meeting, we discussed all of the very important information the families needed to know before we take our Tour Group members halfway around the world.

- **Code of Conduct:** All of our student travelers must sign a code of conduct, detailing that they will be kind and courteous to all on the trip and in the places we

visit, they will not use drugs or alcohol, they will keep their chaperones aware of their location, they will behave safely and use good judgement, and they will follow all directions given by directors and chaperones on the tour.

- **Travel Permission for Unaccompanied Minor:** This is important to prove that our young students have their parents' permission to leave the country with us. We require that all parents sign it, as well as a notary.
- **Teams and team leader roles:** We have found that working in "teams" is an effective way to keep organized on tour. We divide our students and chaperones up into several teams, of usually five to eight people. We try to assign teams based on friendships and students and families who will like to be together. One chaperone is the team captain though the team may include more than one chaperone. The team captain takes attendance for their group whenever we are reuniting as a large group and then reports back to the director that all of their team members are present. We also often split up by teams if we will have a chance to do some

shopping or smaller excursions when we are not a large group.

- **Room list:** We assign our students' roommates and try to take into account who will work well with each other. Usually our rooms are doubles. We remind the students that they cannot switch roommates after this has been established, because we have to know where to find each of them in case of fire or emergency.
- **Itinerary:** Everyone understandably wants to know where we are going, and when! We have had a rough itinerary for months now, but by this point, we have some real details about what days we will be in which place and what specific attractions we will get a chance to visit.
- **Packing suggestions:** Several specific packing suggestions we share are... Bring something to cover your shoulders with—some churches may not allow bare shoulders.
  - On the plane, bring your instrument as your carry-on, and a backpack as a personal item, with purses inside the backpack.
  - Bring a real watch! Phones are getting more and more easy to use overseas, but they are still not as reliable as regular watches, and being on time when we need to rendezvous is essential!
- **Medical form:** Collect a medical form listing any allergies and medical needs from each traveler. We communicate this information to our tour company ahead of time, who then lets our scheduled restaurants know about any food allergies in advance. The student and the chaperone of the student with allergies carry an allergy kit as well as a letter with allergy instructions that is translated into the language of every country that we are visiting.
- **Phones and traveling:** This past trip, more of our students were able to use their phones overseas than ever before. Their families back home were thrilled to see their pictures and hear about their experiences with no time lag! If it was desired, most cell carriers can add an international access for the short time it is needed. If students did not add international access, each of our hotels

had free WiFi which allowed them to communicate just as easily, albeit limited to the time they were in the hotel. We directors found international access to be very helpful when we ran into a major travel snafu on the way home!

**Not everything will go according to plan.** If you are planning your first tour, chances are that you have some concerns about potential “disasters” that might happen on the way, and how you might deal with them. Our trip, by and large, went very smoothly, but a few things came up along the way that we think might be worth mentioning to help ease concerns.

**You will not be alone!** Our tour company provided us with our kind and knowledgeable guide, Dahlia. She met us at the airport when we landed in Vilnius, Lithuania and stayed with us until we left at the airport in Tallinn, Estonia. She was always able to help us communicate with people in our host countries, and help organize us through her knowledge of each location we visited. Her help was indispensable. Our bus and bus driver were also available to us the entire trip.

**Traveling with instruments is always a challenge.** Regardless of rules, if the captain of a plane says that instruments will not be allowed on board, they are not allowed on

board. Occasionally, on smaller planes, this has been an issue for us. By being very understanding, polite, and cooperative, however, the few times throughout our tours that we have been required to put instruments below the plane have not been the disaster they may have been. We communicate the value of the instruments and our valid concern about their damage, and every time the flight crew has been kind enough to let us help load and unload the instruments by hand. We reinforce the instruments' packing by packing them more snugly in their cases, loosening the strings, and putting stuffing on either side of the bridge to make sure it doesn't fall over.

**Travel problems may come up.** On our way home, we were split into two groups on separate flights to cross the Atlantic. One flight was delayed while the other was not. We were so relieved we had international access on our cell phones because without that, we wouldn't have been able to communicate with each other! We were also able to call MCI's emergency number, and they were thankfully able to rebook our domestic flight home so that half our students were not stranded in Chicago overnight. While in the moment, experiences like these can be very nerve-racking,

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**Erika Lord-Castillo** (violin, viola) has been a faculty teacher in the SIU-Edwardsville Suzuki Program since 2009. Originally from Iowa City, Iowa, Erika earned a Bachelor of Music degree in Violin Performance and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Literature, Sciences and Arts from the University of Iowa. She holds a Master's in Music Education from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, and studied Suzuki pedagogy Violin Books 1-10 with Vera McCoy-Sulentic. Erika has also completed Suzuki teacher training with Michelle Higa George, Moshe Neumann, Judy Bossuat, Nancy Jackson, Christie Felsing, and William Preucil, Senior. Erika presented her Masters Thesis at the American String Teachers Association national conference in March 2011, and her article, “John Kendall's Early Contributions to Suzuki Education in the United States”; was published in the American Suzuki Journal in Fall 2012. Erika received the Suzuki Association Certificate of Achievement Level I in the summer of 2015.



**Allison Huebner-Woerner** has served as a faculty violin and viola instructor at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville Suzuki String Program for the past 22 years. In addition, she has been director of the Edwardsville Youth Orchestra, and is currently director of the SIUE Suzuki Tour Group. She holds degrees from University of Missouri-Columbia and SIUE in Music Performance and Music Education. Allison served as a graduate assistant to John Kendall while completing her long-term Suzuki training, and was a doctoral assistant to John McLeod during her doctoral studies at University of Missouri-Columbia.

## What Is Healthy Competition and why do we want to foster it?

By Meredith Connie

### An Exploration of Competition

Competition, it can be said, is a driving force for self-betterment. We see around us our peers, some of whom can perform some tasks better than us or have reached a higher level of achievement in some ways. This act of observation drives us to strive to meet or exceed those achievements—all of which sounds very positive. There is, however, a downside: it is the insidious transformation of the person with whom one is competing into an obstacle rather than a person, a dehumanization that makes the degradation and defeat of the opponent something to be celebrated. Competition is not just something individuals do—all the same arguments and conclusions apply to larger bodies like businesses and corporations, and notably, the sporting world, where “being a good sport” can sometimes seem like a contradictory use of the word “sport.”

### What is healthy competition?

As a loose definition, healthy competition is the interaction between individuals that promotes and fosters striving for higher achievements yet creates an environment where everyone in the group hopes that everyone will do well, rather than wish that others fail. Striving to do well without the destructive wish to seem better by the failure or degradation of others is a characteristic worth striving for, one that is worthy of the idea behind Suzuki Talent Education—that a beautiful soul is the ultimate goal, summarized in the often-quoted words of Shinichi Suzuki: “Beautiful tone, beautiful heart.”

### A Work in Progress

Finding a balance between being supportive of your peers and achieving personal excellence is tricky to achieve, and it is a balance that will always be under negotiation. If we consider that instrumental technique is always a work in progress, with aspects of it that will need adjustment more or less constantly as the years go by—a work of “gradual approximation”—then the work of social adjustment and setting expectations will also need adjustments.

Ground rules determining acceptable group class behavior are the norm: when to raise your hand, when not to talk. In the same way, we also set up expectations as to how our students will interact with their peers to prevent conflict: they should not criticize, talk over, or make fun of their peers. In addition, if you believe in the goal of healthy competition, then you also want to strive to create an environment where students genuinely wish their comrades well, not only when performing, but when questions or comparisons come up during musical games, musicianship, or masterclass situations. To do this we may often have to work against all of the influences that surround our students in their wider environments. But this is what we do all the time, as this is exactly the principle involved in parent education—why do we help parents to celebrate small achievable goals and learn how to engage in positive rather than negative reinforcement? We do these things to create the kind of student who is self-confident, who is comfortable with themselves and enjoys music making with others. Encouraging supportive behavior between students can simply be an extension of the same principles, if we choose them to be.

### What are some practical ways to achieve healthy competition?

Group classes are the perfect place to encourage healthy competition, as that is where our students interact with their peers. We can see personalities so easily in this context, and we can also see their habits of interaction. What we do as teachers in how we listen to our students and how we make room for different levels of ability will profoundly influence how our students treat each other. To make positive change, change the environment; to make changes, be the change you wish to see and model it for others.

#### Games with Winners

The kind of games and who “wins” can really change the classroom environment. For instance, when I play games like musical chairs in a Pre-Twinkle group class, the class gets a point if every student in the room is able to sit in their chair without knocking anything over or banging their instrument. They have to work together to achieve their goal. In older group classes, when doing reading exercises using flashcards, the same principle is at work—everyone must meet a time limit before we add more strings or more positions to our reading games. The applications of making goals for the group are quite extensive.

#### Passing or Swapping Games

Many group games where notes or phrases or segments of pieces are passed around in succession (the students play one after another in a series of solos to put together the piece in a jigsaw fashion) are excellent ways to foster raising the level of everyone in the room—and the sense of appreciation and congratulation as students are able to achieve this task.

Similarly, the game where one student performs the tasks of the right hand for a piece and one student performs the left hand tasks (while playing on the same instrument—I call this game left hand/right hand but I'm sure there are many names) is the ultimate in student collaboration. These types of games are dependent on fostering audiation skills in our students—the ability to sing and track the song in your head so that you can drop in and out of a piece at will—a skill I cannot emphasize enough in my group classes. Any audiation game I can think of builds a sense of the class working together.

### Games with Leaders

I find other exercises where students take turns at being a leader teaches all the students that everyone has something to offer and that things that look simple often are not, which is a great appreciation to have because it creates empathy for the struggles of other students. I am thinking primarily here of conducting the group playing repertoire or leading the group in variations of dynamics or tempo variations through movement cues or written/verbal cues like flashcards. Composition and improvisation games where students contribute very individual musical moments that are not dependent on pre-learned material also allows students who may not be as solid on other aspects of musicianship or memorization to shine (these games are also dependent on having a leader to give organization).

The key to making all these games—and particularly the last set of games, where students become leaders—foster community and healthy competition is not just in the type of games but in what we model for our students in our responses. By making contributions valid, by pointing out something of value in what each student tries to contribute, we allow everyone in the room to see that everyone has something to offer and that their own perspective is just that—their own perspective and there are many ways to see and approach every exercise and every problem. I learned a simple lesson from a teacher trainer working outside of Suzuki in a vocal-based early

childhood program (for ages birth to five based in Melbourne, Australia), Emma Hart of Mini Maestros. She teaches three- and four-year-olds in a class setting to match pitches in their singing through call and response. The teacher sings a vocal cue and the students respond individually, and then the teacher simply asks the student to evaluate whether or not the note they sang was the same or different. There is no value judgement, no right or wrong, instead a simple evaluative tool to work out if what they did matched the vocal cue and to use those skills to then choose to match or not to match. Of course, as instrumental teachers we want our students to be able to match our musical cues, but my experience in this class made me consider how I teach tone. Could I not frame teaching tone as a matter of matching or not matching instead of right and wrong? Food for thought.

### A Larger Problem with Broad Ramifications

Terms such as collaborative competition are becoming a part of the social landscape of the 21st century, because the effects of driving competition are far reaching throughout our societies.

The work of Dr. Dan Ariely (James B. Duke Professor of Psychology & Behavioral Economics at Duke University), as outlined in the documentary (*Dis/Honesty: The Truth About Lies*, depicts a society where lying is commonplace in many aspects of life, but particularly notable is that it is regarded as permissible in activities where we have to overcome our competitors to get ahead. Lying undermines trust, so the danger becomes that we doubt everyone around us, creating a society in which mistrust and cynicism have replaced communal activity. It is hard indeed to engage in collective activities if you doubt the motives of those sitting next to you. Studies by Dr. Richard Wilkinson (Professor Emeritus of Social Epidemiology at the University of Nottingham) have demonstrated that when societies have huge gaps between those who have a great deal of wealth and power and those who have not, many problems arise that are not endemic in

nations that have a more even distribution of wealth: increased violent crime, rates of incarceration due to increased punitive response, lack of social mobility, low life expectancies and increased mental illness. These indicators arise from observing competitors and measuring your own wealth and achievements against theirs rather than arising out of poverty itself; in short, these vast social problems are a result of competitive practices that pit us against each other to see who wins more of the prizes.

Destructive behavior between colleagues within the Suzuki world can also be traced to competitive practices—a desire on their part to be seen as better, more accomplished or more liked—or that most inflexible, common and destructive attitude: “I am right, and in order for me to be right, you must be wrong.” Do we treat our colleagues in the same way as we wish our students to behave in our classes? Do we believe and act in a way that says, “There is room for everyone, and I don't have to succeed at the expense of others”?

To my mind, at the root of fostering healthy competition (or collaborative competition) is a simple question: Is the Suzuki philosophy really about trying to make the world a better place? I cannot help but think an overwhelming yes must be the answer—it is no accident that the Talent Education philosophy grew out of the ashes of the Second World War, and that Shinichi Suzuki wished to cultivate a generation with beautiful hearts. I also sincerely believe we make the world a better place through our

*Continued on p. 60*



**Meredith Connie**

(MMus, San Francisco Conservatory of Music; MPhil, University of Sydney) lived and worked as a Suzuki guitar teacher in the US until 2016, where she received her training through the SAA. In 2017 she returned

to the country of her birth, Australia, where she is currently engaged in training to become an Alexander Technique teacher, and continues to share her love of her instrument and teaching.

## The Patience of a Suzuki Teacher

By Lauren Canitia

*“Ability is one thing we have to produce (or work for) ourselves. That means to repeat and repeat an action until it becomes part of ourselves. It is easy to say, but to have energy to do it—there lies the problem... There are only a few who go through with their purpose and accomplish things. Whatever work it may be, the way to success is, after all, to stick with one’s intentions to the very last. Everyone is able to do it; it depends only on one’s will.”*

– Shinichi Suzuki<sup>1</sup>

It’s funny how musicians are wired to ooze their creativity through music. Those who use music as their creative outlet are often that way from birth. Music has always been part of my being. My parents remember me making sounds and singing to myself from early on, and that only increased as I grew. I went from singing sounds to singing words to eventually learning to play the violin. I begged for lessons for years before my parents finally agreed, and the rest is history.

Making music is my creative outlet, and I never fully realized this until my ability to play violin was taken away. In January 2015, while I was driving 50 mph, another vehicle pulled out in front of me, causing a crash that left me with a compounded fracture of my left wrist. It was a severe break—my radius, ulna, and scaphoid were broken, and my wrist was deformed. The pain was instant and excruciating. The emergency room staff set it the best they could, but the bones were still misaligned, and I would need to have surgery. Since the high-impact crash caused excessive swelling, they had to wait 10 days before they could operate. Two titanium plates and 17 screws later, the surgery was a success. Occupational therapy was intense and painful. Initially, I could barely grasp a sheet of paper between my thumb and index finger. It was over a month before I could even straighten my fingers or make a fist. Therapy sessions were

twice per week for eight months. I made progress, but it was slow.

I was unable to pronate or supinate my wrist for many, many months. This was a terrible feeling, but especially so for a violinist! When I tried to hold my violin on my shoulder, my wrist actually turned *away* from the neck. My fingers were incapable of even reaching the fingerboard. This waiting period was the hardest of my life. I never realized how much I *needed* to play violin until I couldn’t. There were times when, overcome by discouragement, I started thinking about choosing a new career. What would I do? I had only been trained to play and teach the violin.

Teaching was a challenge. How do Suzuki students learn if their teacher can’t play? Being unable to demonstrate is almost the opposite of the Suzuki method! I reverted to singing a lot, and had my students imitate the notes I sang. I also tried to demonstrate as if my violin was a cello—but it sounded pretty awful. I used videos on YouTube almost daily so students could see the bowing and technique of other teachers. Some Suzuki parents stepped up and demonstrated songs for their kids, using their own violin playing to teach. I encouraged lots of listening—not just to recordings, but to older Suzuki students in my studio. I had younger students pair with older students, and used the more advanced students to “teach” the young ones and assist me in lessons.

I felt “blocked” musically, but I found some solace in writing—journaling and poetry, and listening to vocal music. I started teaching myself the cello. Since the form of the wrist on the neck is more natural, it wasn’t too hard to play. I practiced cello daily. It was the only outlet I had to make music. I tried listening to orchestral music, but that made me sad, knowing that I used to be the one playing it, and that I no longer was able to.

After my progress plateaued, my occupational therapist recommended a device to help stretch the ligaments and tendons in my wrist. My arm was in a static-progressive device for two to three hours per day, trying to stretch my range of motion. After a few months of use, I could reach the E string with my first and second fingers! Eventually, even this therapy stopped making progress. My supination measured about 70 degrees and pronation about 55 degrees (violinists need excessive supination—about 95 degrees!). I sought alternative therapy at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago. We tried different techniques, which brought some change, but it wasn’t drastic enough to play. I was still having intense pain in my tendons. After six weeks of alternative therapy, I sought the opinion of a top hand surgeon in Chicago. He said that my tendon was rubbing on one of the plates, which needed to be removed in order to avoid a rupture.

A second surgery was scheduled in October (nine months after the initial surgery). It was much less invasive, considering there was no injury that had to heal; it was simply removing hardware. The healing time was much less than the first time around, swelling was less as well. Within two weeks, I was playing violin without pain! My range of motion increased gradually and I accepted a Christmas gig. It was my personal goal that I’d be performing again by the concert on December 13. I practiced daily, increasing my time each day, and taking

breaks as I felt fatigued. This is where my Suzuki training and learned patience came in handy. I played Book One songs as part of my daily diet. After not playing for nine months, intonation and tone were the first things to leave my muscle memory. Lots of slow, careful repetition helped me to redevelop my intonation. Daily tonalization helped me produce optimal tone. The two-hour concert was tiring, to say the least, but I did it! On December 13, I played my first public performance in almost a year. It was my Everest! I had been healed and restored! It was an extremely emotional day.

My range of motion is still not fully back—I am limited in the extreme ranges, and any of the combination movements (i.e. supination and flexion in high positions). I know that my drive

to play the violin again gave me the motivation and discipline for the hours of daily therapy exercises. The patience I have learned as a Suzuki teacher to stick with my intentions and to not give up helped me to persevere. I hope to never again experience this, as it was indeed a dark time for me. I am thankful for my friends, students and Suzuki parents that stuck with me, encouraged me to have patience, and continually asked about my progress. Almost daily, I had students ask, “How is your arm? Can you play yet?” After nearly one year of saying “No, not yet,” the joy on their faces warmed my heart when I could finally say, “It’s all better!” ●

## Notes

1. Suzuki, *Nurtured by Love*, second ed., 44



**Lauren Canitia** is a graduate from the Conservatory of Music at Wheaton College (Wheaton, IL), where she earned a Bachelor of Music with an emphasis in Pedagogy. She teaches Suzuki and traditional violin and viola, and has worked extensively with

the Suzuki program at the Community School of the Arts at Wheaton College. Lauren has registered Suzuki units through Book 6, and is a member of the Suzuki Association of the Americas. While teaching violin to young children, Lauren often incorporates her Musikgarten training (music and movement). She has studied violin with Wei-Shu Wang Co, Paul Zafer and Lee Joier, and did her Suzuki training with Rebecca Sandrok and Nancy Jackson. Lauren started and directed the Suzuki program at the Fox River Academy of Music and Art (Oswego, IL), while maintaining a studio of approximately 45 students.

### *Quality Ingredients, continued from p. 19*

What things should a student focus on to make sure they are adequately set up to play a piece? That is up to the teacher. I generally advise starting with a “big muscles first” strategy. Start with the trunk of the body: stance, head position, straight back, the instrument position balanced appropriately on the body, then work out to the limbs. The one exception to this order is that the bow hold is so important that it must be balanced from the start. Having a properly set up bow hold will help balance the bow arm. A bow hold should have the fingers naturally spaced, and the center of balance of the bow hold should be the two center fingers making a circle with the thumb. Using the “bunny bow hold” where the index finger and pinky are not even on the bow is one good way to start with a center-balanced bow hold.

I am always shocked how much a few students practice without commensurate

progress. This is usually due to a deficiency in listening and to inattentive practice. I am always shocked at the number of my students who eventually wind up in the top eight first violin chairs of our top St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra and who, because they often don’t have plans to major in music, average only 30 to 40 minutes of practice for about five days a week. I believe the difference is that the quality of the setup of those successful students enables them to spend far less time recovering from faulty practice, and that propels them to achieve great things on a modest effort.

Dr. Suzuki taught us how to practice when he coined the phrase, “Fingers first, then bow, then go.” That is something we and our students should never forget. *Always start from quality ingredients.* ●

### *One Thing at a Time, continued from p. 43*

learning them. Within its use lies one of the keys to success in achieving mastery while we simultaneously endorse the love and respect for the child which is such a basic and integral part of our

Suzuki philosophy. By the way, I did accept Joshua back as a student. We worked happily for many years while we took one thing at a time! ●

### *Learning Experiences, continued from p. 39*

When I think about the person who embodies the true essence of the Suzuki philosophy, I immediately think of Mary Craig Powell. Having been my friend, colleague and mentor for the past 30+ years, she has been a wonderful influence on my teaching career.

Mary Craig and I both have a great love for Suzuki and also a love of music reading. Early on, she taught me the importance of reading in the Suzuki method. For students to continue music study and for their instrument to become a life-long joy, students must have the skill of reading music. She shared with me her reading routine of assigning several pieces each week and hearing at least one of these pieces at the following lesson. Reading is a priority for her! She teaches reading skills with the same expectations as she has for teaching the Suzuki repertoire, and always with a nurturing and loving spirit.

She will always be my guide and mentor, and I will always strive to be more like Mary Craig!

—Fay Adams, SAA Piano Teacher Trainer and Director of the Suzuki Piano School of Knoxville ●

## Dealing with Perfectionism in Suzuki Students

By Alan K. Duncan

Recently my daughter was helping me sweep the driveway. Storms and high winds had left lots of debris in the driveway and she came out, broom in hand, to help me clean up. With only a few minutes to spare before bedtime, I told her that we should take care of part of the job and leave the rest until the following day. Her response? “No, it has to be perfect.” If the driveway has to be perfect, imagine what a violin piece has to be! “No, it has to be perfect,” of course, is the mantra of every perfectionist everywhere.

Perfectionists can be incredibly endearing because they are so responsible. Give them a task and they’ll do it to, well, perfection. They throw themselves into the task at hand with every bit of energy they can muster. But perfection is an impossible and unsustainable standard. Eventually something must give under the weight of all that perfection. By the time most of us reach adulthood, we learn to moderate our perfectionist tendencies. The impossibly unsatisfiable and mutually exclusive constraints of life prevent us from holding ourselves to the universal standard of perfectionism. Along the way, however, many succumb to anxiety, low self-regard, and procrastination as a way of dealing with the need to be perfect. Since parents shape their children’s way of being in the world to such a great extent, we can help avoid perfectionism in our children or at least help them moderate their tendencies.

### Why is perfectionism detrimental to musicians?

Musical performance is an inherently subjective and interpretive act. Certain facts about stylistic interpretation of the composer’s intent are simply not known. On that level, perfection is unattainable simply because no perfect standard exists. But most young musicians in their early years are more concerned about the technical aspects of performance

they develop in the practice room. There, practice is at first an exercise in learning the notes, then later an exercise in achieving a high level of consistency. Most perfectionism strikes here. As pieces grow longer and more complex, errors are statistically more likely. At the same time, opportunities that rely on auditions raise the stakes for performance errors.

All musicians have some performance anxiety, while some have more than others. One of the most virulent forms of performance anxiety, though, comes from a mistake-avoidance stance, because it is such a tension-inducing condition. Perfectionism can also lead to unhealthy practice habits such as over-practicing and practicing repetitions beyond the point of fatigue, risking injury in the process. Ultimately, perfectionism can be associated with low self-esteem, procrastination, anxiety, and self harm.

### How do I know if I might have a perfectionist for a child?

Perfectionists aren’t too hard to recognize. Child counselor and teacher Leah Davies, who has written about perfectionism in children, outlined some of the common features of perfectionists:

- They are unusually self-conscious and easily embarrassed.
- They are very sensitive to criticism and react negatively to feedback.
- They may tend to procrastinate, dawdle, or avoid doing tasks.
- They often have low self-confidence and may be socially inhibited.

And of course, they set high standards for themselves and are sometimes critical of others who don’t meet them. For many kids, the line between a genuine quest for excellence and perfectionism is blurry.

### How can parents avoid teaching their children perfectionist traits?

Some of the elements of perfectionism are genetically-inherited. A child’s tendency toward positive or negative emotions and their anxiety levels are inherited to a great extent from her parents. Sorry kids, you can’t choose those...

But many of a child’s personality characteristics are learned. Even those that are innate can be modulated up or down by the parent’s interactions with their children.

Some ways of interacting with children that can reduce perfectionist tendencies:

#### 1. Avoid modeling perfectionism.

Since children often learn that perfect is the only acceptable standard from parents who demand the same from themselves, we can be better role models by replacing the standard of “perfect” with “perfectly acceptable.” The standard we should be interested in is the standard of working toward excellence. It isn’t a perfect outcome we should be interested in; rather, it’s the honest effort at achieving excellence. Did you work hard and give it your perfectly human effort? Then you did a perfectly acceptable job!

#### 2. Make praise specific and low-key.

The risk of over-praising kids is that they begin to associate a specific action with a global state of being. For example, if the child plays a passage and the parent says, “Oh, you’re awesome!” then the child connects playing with a trait that they must possess. It’s better to say, “I really liked how you remembered the bowing pattern that time.” Low-key, specific, and process-oriented comments make for constructive praise.

#### 3. Avoid comparisons with other children.

By comparing rates of progress, kids sense that parental

affection is tied to progress and they will do everything they can to hold onto that. Since the rate of progress is related to so many variables outside of their control, this sets up an impossible standard to meet. Most parents are circumspect about making direct comparisons, but we all succumb to more subtle versions of it by talking about who is in which book and who's on what piece.

**4. Embrace and teach a growth mindset.** In some ways, a growth mindset is the ideal antidote to perfectionism. The growth mindset refers to an orientation toward competence by growth rather than the result of fixed, innate ability. By emphasizing this orientation and the idea that growth and mistakes go hand-in-hand, parents can diffuse some perfectionist tendencies.

**5. Point out the cognitive dissonances of their faulty logic.** Perfectionists raise their own mental tightropes to very high levels. Even when the stakes aren't very high, they raise them. With perfectionist performance anxiety, we can ask them questions that point out the discrepancy between their fears and the actual outcome. Imagine this conversation between a parent and a child:

*(Before a recital)*

*Parent: "I see that you're anxious about your recital. What's the worst thing that could happen?"*

*Child: "They would laugh at me."*

*Parent: "I've never seen audience members laugh at performers. How likely do you think that is?"*

*Child: "Very."*

*(After the recital)*

*Parent: "How was it?"*

*Child: "It was okay, but I forgot to repeat that one section."*

*Parent: "So you made a little mistake. I bet almost no one noticed. Did they laugh at you?"*

*Child: "No."*

*Parent: "Remember you thought it was very likely that they would laugh if you made a mistake? Sometimes we think bad things will happen and they almost never do."*

This simple before/after interaction is a form of cognitive-behavioral

therapy that plants the seeds of how children (and adults) can begin to test their assumptions about feared outcomes. By pointing out the dissonance between what they feared might happen and the reality, children can learn to counter their own negative self-talk.

**6. Love and respect should be unconditional.** What happens in the practice room stays in the practice room. Imagine a firewall between the practice room and the rest of the house. If things don't go well in practice, in a lesson, or a performance, let it go. If conflict arises in practice, let it stay there. Withdrawing love and respect on account of something that happens with their playing is a recipe for perfectionism and other neuroses, because children will do almost anything to look good in the eyes of their parents.

**7. Teach kids step-by-step problem solving and goal-setting skills.** Perfectionists expect immediate results and become frustrated when they don't immediately achieve perfection. Playing a musical instrument doesn't work that way. Starting out, the teacher and parent work on bite-sized chunks at a time. Later, children learn to do that themselves. The more visible we make that process, the more control they feel and the more success they will have in practice. By working on smaller parts of a piece and setting progressive goals, they'll learn that mistakes and progress are best friends.

**8. Teach children to use positive self-talk and ways of coping with negative self-assessment.** The negative emotions that accompany perfectionism can be overwhelming. The running monologue in our heads can be tamed and filtered by pushing it in a positive direction. Children can be taught to identify negative self-talk and put it into the mental wastebasket. We can also model non-judgmental speech as a way of helping children avoid negative self-talk. We can learn to catch ourselves using judgmental language in many situations and restate it in a neutral way.

**9. Involve children in a range of activities, not only music.** The most resilient people don't define themselves solely by success in a narrow discipline. They involve themselves in a variety of interests and outlets so that if something is not going well in one area, they have others to draw on as a source of self-regard. The purpose isn't to give kids a host of other pursuits at which they can be perfect. And they should not be overwhelmed by endless shuttling between activities. The purpose is to give them a more well-rounded range of abilities and deeper well from which to draw support and confidence.

There is a fine line between working toward excellence vs. pushing toward perfectionism. But recognizing perfectionist traits early can allow parents to shape their language and interactions with children in ways that tone down these tendencies. Of what value is any of these musical endeavors if children are so driven or paralyzed by the pursuit of perfection that they can't enjoy it? The question they should be asking isn't "Did I play it perfectly?" It should be "Did I say something important with my music? Was I true to the music?"

And no, the driveway still isn't perfect. But it's perfectly acceptable. ●●

## Notes

1. Davies, L., M.Ed. (2005, March). Perfectionism in Children. Retrieved September 28, 2016, from <http://www.kellybear.com/TeacherArticles/TeacherTip53.html>
2. Portions of this essay were published online at "The Suzuki Experience" <http://www.suzukiexperience.com>



**Alan Duncan** is the parent practice partner for a nine-year-old violinist. As a pianist, he has performed with the Trio Grazioso and is currently an accompanist at the Forest City Talent Education School in London, Ontario.

Dr. Duncan has been an active supporter of youth musical development, previously serving on the Boards of the Southeastern Minnesota Suzuki Association and the Southeastern Minnesota Youth Orchestras.

## Filosofía Suzuki at Universidad Panamericana in Mexico City

By Leslie Mizrahi

It is with great pleasure and admiration that I write about the Suzuki philosophy course being offered in a university setting.

The Universidad Panamericana in Mexico City recently opened the School of Fine Arts. The first program that is being offered, starting July 2016, is the Bachelor in Music and Innovation, with three different specialties: performance, composition, and music education. This is the first time in Mexico that a private university offers a degree in music in the whole country.

The School of Fine Arts is directed by Dr. Gabriel Pliego, whose vision for the bachelor program, is that of a musician

formed with a high level of musicianship, including an excellent level of performance, ample knowledge of different music teaching pedagogies, and a wide set of entrepreneurial skills.

In his vision, the 21st century music educator will also need to have excellent performing and composition skills; the same way that a composer will need to be a great performer and teacher, and the performer will need to have great skills in composition and teaching; and all of them will need to be able to create or transform their own jobs or companies. The School of the Arts therefore aims to create leaders in each one of the students.

Furthermore, Gabriel Pliego has been the President of the Mexican Suzuki Association since 2005. Gabriel will finish his duty as president of the Association in October 2017. He has embraced the Suzuki method and philosophy as his own and has taught violin with this method for more than 12 years.

Knowing that the Suzuki philosophy has proved to be an excellent teaching method, Dr. Pliego has included as part of the curriculum the complete “Filosofía” course, created and taught by SAA Teacher Trainer Caroline Fraser. The “Introduction to the Filosofía Suzuki” course is usually a four-day course, which has been successfully offered all



over Latin America for more than 30 years now.

In March 2017, this course made history, for it was offered, for the first time in America, as part of the obligatory curriculum of a university career. It was a 32-hour course, taught over six days, during two long weekends. Caroline remarked that apart from understanding the Suzuki pedagogy from the teachers' point of view, these first-year students gained an insight into their own skill development, practice habits and performance preparation.

As a Suzuki piano teacher with 12 years' experience, a board member of the Mexican Suzuki Association for the past seven years, recently elected president of the Mexican Suzuki Association, and as a student of the first generation of this new career at Universidad Panamericana, I am thrilled and excited to acknowledge that the Suzuki philosophy is now entering the professional world in Mexico.

I am sure that this important step will give the Suzuki method a well-deserved place in the music education realm, for it will allow the university students to embrace Dr. Shinichi Suzuki's vision and enable them to apply it both in their own lives and in their future students as an invaluable tool to become and to create better human beings. I see this opportunity as a launching board for its expansion in the hands of the new generations of musicians.

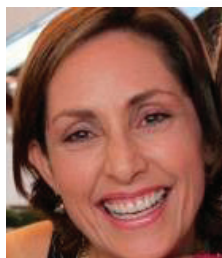
My sincere congratulations to Dr. Gabriel Pliego and to Ms. Caroline Fraser for this very important step in music education. I am sure that little by little, step by step, this first action will grow and expand, assuring that we will have a new generation of teachers who will have better teaching tools and will spread Dr. Shinichi Suzuki's dream of a better world through music. ●●



Caroline, Ximena and Leslie



Teacher and student: respectful bow



**Leslie Mizrahi** has been a Suzuki piano teacher since 2005. Her music school, Instituto Suzuki Vive la Musica, celebrated its seventh anniversary in May 2017. Leslie has been a member of the board of directors of the Mexican Suzuki Association since August 2010. She became a registered Suzuki piano teacher in 2005 and has registered up to Book Five, plus different enrichment courses such as group lessons, music reading, and practicum courses. Most of her training has been done with Caroline Fraser. Leslie has been part of diverse workshops and courses at the Kodály center at HNU, the Orff pedagogy at the San Francisco School, as well as Early Music Stimulation in Peru and Dalcroze pedagogy at Centro Escolar Cedros in Mexico City. Her students have participated in diverse Suzuki workshops internationally: Peru,

Costa Rica, US, and different cities in Mexico. She was part of the directive committee for the Third Latin American Encuentro in Peru 2015. Since 2013 she has taught piano master classes in diverse festivals in different cities in Mexico.

go down in blocks, unless a note is correctly anchored.

The repertoire in Book One, methodically and progressively builds the skills that a young violinist will need to learn the pieces in Books Two and beyond. Developing left hand technique is just one facet of many in the child's practice. Every new skill that has been acquired in Book One, will be applied, reinforced and built upon in Book Two, and again in Book Three, paving the way for shifting, the use of vibrato and moving from one tonal center to others within one piece. If a child can graduate into Book Two with the fingers of the left hand strong and independent, learning new repertoire will be more facile and musicianship will be free to flourish. ●

*We, therefore, the Representatives of the United Fingers of the Left Hand, in every day practice, assembled, appealing to the Strings of the Violin for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Names, and by Authority of the good fingers of these hands and arms, solemnly publish and declare, that these United Fingers are, and of right ought to be Free and Independent entities.*

but in the end, it all became yet another exciting adventure from our tour.



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love of music—but also by consciously creating within our students and within ourselves a place where everyone (not just our students) can succeed. ●



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