




American Suzuki Journal

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**Welcoming
Ontario Suzuki
Association**





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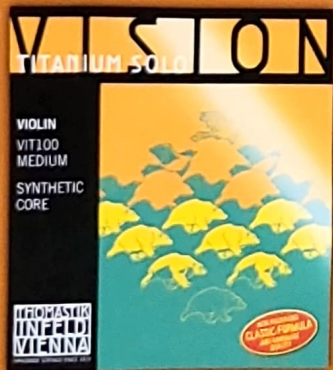
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Our Mission

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



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Chair's Column

By Teri Einfeldt

I'm looking back at my career as a Suzuki teacher. I am struck by the fact that I have experienced many different teaching situations that have helped me to grow as a person in ways I could never have imagined. At first I ran my own program in Corning, NY, which had been originally started by Lorraine Fink. I made my own rules, kept track of the finances as those who run their own programs need to do. It was there also that I met my late husband, David. After that I moved to Birmingham, AL, for a year to play in the Birmingham Symphony. I taught in the Symphony Community Music School as a very part-time teacher, with no ties and very little involvement with the administration. After that, I worked at Ithaca Talent Education and at the same time, David and I ran our own school in Corning, NY. Then I taught for a year at The Cleveland Institute of Music. Currently I teach at the University of Hartford's Hartt School of Music, Theater and Dance. The combination of all these eclectic situations created monumental opportunities for learning how to adapt from an environment involving roughly 40 students and their parents, to the present day which involves decision-making that may affect, give or take, 2,500 students and their parents. What was interesting was that I had to become much more flexible, while at the same time adhering to and enforcing much more structure.

Most people probably do not realize that I have been teaching at The Hartt School now for 22 years. My boss at Hartt for 18 of the 22 years was an extremely wise and global thinker. He raised the level of the Hartt Community Division to portray excellence at all levels, babies through adults. For the first five years or so, he was extremely frustrated with the way David and I thought about things.

Coming from our own program where we decided all the rules, and from ITE where we were consulted all along but still towards the single purpose of Suzuki education, we had no clue how to function as part of an eclectic, diverse educational institution. Suddenly budgets were integrated, concert dates negotiated, rooms shared, checks written with a minimum of two-weeks' notice, and the list goes on. Our new boss worked hard to mold our way of thinking so that we could remain individuals, yet work well with others by the use of compromise and understanding of what others do within our institution.

Being part of a larger sum always makes it trickier. SAA now has a membership of over 7,500 people. What I am learning from being chair is staggering. Whenever a pebble is thrown in the water, we, as owners of the SAA, have no idea how the ripples created from this little stone affect all the other aspects of what good the organization is trying to achieve. The organization is vast, supporting two continents with many different instruments as well as ECE. The SAA is recognized and respected by many outside professional organizations and by individuals highly involved in the field of education. We have accomplished so many wonderful things, including a sequential, detailed teacher training pedagogy program. We have developed new courses and new opportunities for teachers to be recognized for their accomplishments. Our website is outstanding, with many helpful links to lead us to information at many levels. We are proud that we are a dynamic organization in which change is occurring to meet the needs of the teachers of the 21st century.

The members of the SAA are the owners of the SAA. It is important to think

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Suzuki Association of the Americas 2010 Annual Meeting: a summary

Board Chair Teri Einfield opened the SAA's 2010 Annual General Meeting, welcoming and thanking everyone who came.

Marilyn Kesler talked about this summer's institutes. With 67 institutes planned, there are 10 more than in 2009 and 4 more than the average number over the past six years! 32 states are to hold one or more institutes, and the eight to be held in Canada will take place in six different provinces. In addition to the North American Summer Institutes, Festivals, which are the Latin American equivalent of Institutes, were held in Mexico, Peru, El Salvador and Costa Rica. A few of the additional sites where teacher training was held included Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay.

Marilyn also announced the establishment of a new scholarship fund, the John and Catherine Kendall Teacher Training Fund. The Board is very pleased to be able to honor the Kendalls through this special endeavor. Further details are to be announced in the fall.

Marilyn O'Boyle treated the group with some encouraging statistics about SAA's growth and accomplishments. The average membership during the previous year (May, 2010) was 7,500. 84% of the membership is in the US; 9% in Canada and 1% each in Argentina and Brazil. 47 additional countries are also represented within the membership.

Betsy Stuenkel, Board Secretary, thanked outgoing Board members: Carol Ourada and Ruth Engle Lerner are finishing three-year terms in July. As part of her Board service, Carol has chaired the Audit and the CLC Award Committees. Ruth has served as Chair of the Development Steering Committee. Both will be greatly missed.

Mark George, Chair-Elect and Chair of the Nominating Committee, introduced and welcomed four new Board members who will begin service this August.

- **Dan Browning** is the founder and President of DB Consulting, Inc., where he provides business services to corporate clients and consulting services to nonprofits. He and his wife Kirsten (a Suzuki violin instructor and the Director of the Atlanta Suzuki Institute) live in the Atlanta area.
- **Sarah Bylander Montzka** teaches viola and musicianship at the Music Institute of Chicago, where she founded and directs the annual *Violopalooza* workshop, now in its seventh year. Sarah is also the Associate Director of the Colorado Suzuki Institute.
- **Patricia Purcell** teaches in a unique Suzuki in the Schools

program in the Hursi-Eales-Bedford School District. As a member of the North Texas Suzuki Association, she has organized teacher development workshops and assisted in establishing teacher training at the DFW WOW Suzuki Institute.

- **MaryLou Roberts** teaches Suzuki Guitar in Michigan and is coordinator of the Ann Arbor Suzuki Institute. Since becoming a Teacher Trainer in 2006, MaryLou has conducted courses in South America, Australia, United States and Ireland.

Sue Baer gave an overview of the SAA's new program, the Certificate of Achievement, Level I, which was launched during the Virtual Leadership Retreat one year ago. This Certificate is available by application to teachers who have met the criteria for experience and membership, completed the required courses (Units through 4, plus SPA or Practicum) and whose essay and video material are approved. Beautiful certificates were presented to these recipients:

Cello recipients:	Piano recipients:	Violin recipients:
Blake Brasch, IL	Malgosia Lis, CT	Charles D. Krigbaum, TX
Sally Gross, IL	Sheri Loyd, CA	Meg Lanfear, IL
	J.B. Taylor, KY	Beth Novak, IL
		Danaa Volodika Staggis, IL

Webmaster Jenny Ferenc described some highlights of the SAA website, including:

- Teacher Search
- Upcoming Events
- Your Account Information
- Online Newsletter

Ellen Berry presented the official certificate of affiliation to SAA's newest Chapter Affiliate, the Suzuki Association of Ontario. Vicki Blechta, Chair, accepted the affiliation certificate. SAA is the 10th Affiliate and our first Canadian affiliate. Ellen stated:

"The SAA is pleased to award Chapter Affiliate status to the Suzuki Association of Ontario, which celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2008. The SAA is the largest organization covering 415,000 teachers in Canada. It represents the entire province covering 415,000 square miles.

Carol Ourada gave an update on the Suzuki Principles in Action course (SPA). It has now been given 3 times and 60 people have participated so far. More sessions are being scheduled for the fall months. SPA is a course designed to help teachers incorporate Suzuki's principles effectively in their teaching. If you would like SAA to set up a course in your local area during the 2010-2011 academic year, please contact Pam Brasch: pam@suzukiassociation.org

To end the meeting on a fun, interactive note, the board involved the membership in an informal survey. Several board members acted as baseball pitcher, batter and catcher. The batters went through many contortions trying to hit the ball out into the audience, but failed every time. Fortunately, our catcher had an excellent arm, and on catching each pitch, was able to throw the ball to various audience members. The lucky member who caught the ball was awarded a "Team Suzuki" ball cap, and was asked to read a trivia question aloud to the audience. Those who could answer "yes" to the question stood for congratulatory applause.

These were the questions:

- Who has given to the SAA Annual Fund drive?

- Who has been to an International Suzuki Conference?
- Who does social networking (Twitter, Facebook, etc)?
- Who has visited the SAA website?
- Who has volunteered with the SAA (board members, committee members, etc)?
- Who has met Dr. Suzuki?
- Who has heard the Suzuki tour group perform?
- Who has taken SAA training beyond Book I?
- Who was a Suzuki kid?
- Who has children who are/were Suzuki kids?
- Who is here for their first SAA Conference experience?



Sue Baer and Mark George win one for Team Suzuki.

Continued from p. 2

in terms of the organization as a team. We are the SAA.

When asked what I would like to be remembered for as Board Chair, I had the following answer: It is my dream to make the SAA an important part of each owner's daily life by having them become more involved and encouraging them to be a positive spokesperson for the organization.

We will be celebrating the 40th anniversary of the SAA in 2012. What a wonderful present we could give ourselves if we would up celebrating our achievements and improvements that have come about through respecting each other and having an open approach to problem solving. By working together to assure the success of our leaders of tomorrow, we will continue to fulfill the dreams of Shinichi Suzuki far into the future. ☺

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- **Lifetime Membership**
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Calendar of Events

(fax date, email date or postmark date)

June 1	Summer ASJ deadline
July 31	SAA fiscal year end
September 1	Fall ASJ deadline
September 25	2011 Institute Preliminary Information
September 24-26	SAA Board Meeting
October 15	2011 Institute Applications
December 31	Winter ASJ deadline
	Last day for 2010 charitable gifts
January 6-8, 2011	SAA Board Meeting

Save the Dates:

May 26-30, 2011 SAA Leadership Retreat

New Active Members

<p>U.S. Alaska Hayley J Baksis, Fairbanks Franz Felkl, Juneau Beth Grimes, Fairbanks Laurie Long, Fairbanks Thomas McLean, Fairbanks Benjamin T Morgan, Fairbanks Megan Thompson, Fairbanks Alexandra Wong, Anchorage Alabama Troy K Bast, Birmingham Hannah Shetler, Mobile Arkansas Mike Burkepale, Conway Curtis Goolsby, Little Rock Michael Montgomery, Rogers Wendy Parham, Leslie Rebecca E Schubler, Jacksonville Hope N Smith, Jonesboro Arizona Christi Elie, Chandler Veronna Grandil, Gilbert Rachel Therese Jurkowski, Mesa Charlette Schwepker, Flagstaff Kristen Tourville, Flagstaff Diane Zelickman, Tempe California Emily Chiet, Fremont Marit Chrislock-Lauterbach, Carlsbad Patrick Claypool, Sacramento Gabriel J Deutsch, Pasadena George England, Sacramento Grace A Hsu, Los Angeles Amie Jan, San Jose Kenneth Kihlthau, Stockton Amber Pena, Ceres Vanessa Ramirez, Los Angeles Laurie Rasmussen, Santa Barbara Andrea Sanderson, Santa Monica Rebecca Shaffer, Palmdale Sarah Shasberger, Goleta Julie Ann 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Edmonds Harry Nathaniel Richardson, Issaquah Wisconsin Jessica Kolember, Onalaska Marie Loeffler, Waukesha Eric Miller, Madison Jennifer Paulson, Madison Jessica L Williamson, River Falls Wyoming Jill Laping, Cheyenne</p> <p>CANADA Alberta Brooklyn Kaye Biegel, Grovedale Mark S Eeles, Edmonton Heather Lane, Calgary Laurie I Maetche, Lacombe Rhonda McEachen, Edmonton British Columbia Margaretha Elizabeth Thatcher, Surrey Manitoba Kirsten Bunge, Winnipeg Ontario Natalie Burton, Burlington Allison F Cooke, Guelph Tami Lee Cooper, Edmonton Veronika S Davy, Toronto Joseph Fazakas, Hamilton Gloria Fox, Ottawa Megan Graham, Ottawa Geoffrey A Headland, Ottawa Nigel Hull, Brantford Janice Y Mah, Ottawa Rachel Reimer, London Corey Walden, Burlington Rebecca K Zimmer-Payne, Toronto Quebec Erika Donald, Montreal</p> <p>MEXICO Inigo Aguilar, Mexico City Claudia Castro Guerrero, Mexico City Maria Teresa Castro Madero, Mexico City Beatriz Carlota Ibarra, Guanajuato Victor Martinez Gardoqui, Juarez Santiago Tonatiuh Mireles Larios, Las Conchas Lidia Munoz, Monterrey Miriam Rangel Paniagua, Tlanepantla</p> <p>OTHER COUNTRIES Angela Vaughn, St George, Barbados Bethany Dixon, Monteverde, Costa Rica Eftain Chavez Huaman, Santiago Cusco, Peru Rosalinda Ines Rojas Perez, Piura, Peru Victoria Pastrone, Central, Paraguay Pei-Hsun Lee, Pin-Jen City, Taiwan Sharon Wang, Casa Esperanza, Singapore Zohara Rotem, Sunshine Coast, Australia Ignacio Bucueras Montiel, Madrid, Spain</p>
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By Andrew LaFreniere

The Virtue of Patience

Throughout my career as a guitar and piano teacher, one of the most common things that have been said about my teaching by the parents in my studio is that I am extremely patient. I often find this humorous because of the fact that in general I don't think of myself as an exceedingly patient guy. Considering the work that I do, patience would seem to be a crucial component in the successful outcome of my teaching, and it most certainly is. The very nature of a Suzuki teacher would seem to have patience as a pre-requisite to ensure success.

Patience is not something that has come easily to me, and I have had to work on it constantly. I think it important to mention this as I feel that many parents often struggle with finding the patience to be effective home teachers. I believe that in order to develop the patience required to have successful practice at home, one must review Dr. Suzuki's work. When he said that all children learn at their own pace, I believe he was asking us to allow the time for each child to develop according to their ability. There are many reasons why we lose patience, and if we can anticipate the causes, we will have much more pleasant and consequently productive lessons.

Parents often lose patience during the numerous repetitions required for the proper musical and physical development of the child. This is especially true when the parent has had no prior musical experience. Parents often do not understand that it is the repetition of familiar material which develops the ability for the student. Patience will only come after the parent gains an understanding of the process involved in developing skill on the instrument. When they become aware of the small successes that occur with daily repetition, insight will be gained and patience will increase. I spend time discussing this process during parent education classes. We make sure to discuss the importance of the Twinkle variations and the benefits they provide to the child. This is an important conversation to have, as Twinkles will be a part of their lives for quite some time. If not properly prepared, impatience with the Twinkles and other assignments could develop.

Distractions and scheduling issues sap the patience from just about everyone. It is most crucial that lesson time be considered as sacred time. This must be one of the unalterable events of the day. Parents need to eliminate distractions to the lesson. When there are other siblings in the house this can be difficult. Try to establish special activities for the children not having a lesson.

Distractions such as telephones, televisions and pets can be easily avoided. Make sure to schedule social activities around the lesson time and be sure that interruptions are kept to a minimum. It takes just of bit of planning ahead.

Scheduling issues can be quite tricky. In today's world, it is not uncommon for a mother to be in the car for most of the afternoon, driving her children from one activity to the next. When trying to squeeze in a lesson at one precise time, with no room for error, this makes for a tense and anxiety filled lesson. The pressure of having to accomplish the goals we have set for ourselves in a limited amount of time creates impatience. A young child may not be ready to jump on their guitar stool at the prescribed time. We must allow for some breathing room. When establishing your daily routine, be sure to leave ample time for a stress-free lesson. Impatience is not necessarily directed to the child in this case but due to the pressures created by scheduling issues. Still, young children will often perceive the impatience as being directed towards them. Make sure to establish your daily routine by first prioritizing the events in the day. Once you have done this, set up your schedule to offer the optimum time for your child to have his/her lesson. If you find that there is not enough time, then something must be removed from the schedule. I know that we often feel that this is not possible, but my experience has shown that those who simplify their schedules have much more productive and successful experiences. An added bonus is that we have removed some stress from our lives, which in turn allows us to be more patient.

In *Ability Development from Age Zero*, Dr. Suzuki mentions that if parents spoke to all of their children in a pleasant voice, they would "the sure to raise brighter and more obedient children." This thought is expressed in the chapter where he discusses the idea that parents can be naughty. He mentions that parents often have a sense of ownership with regards to their children. This will, at times, make them react impatiently, especially when they perceive that the child is not reacting the way that they feel he/she should. When this occurs during a lesson, it is usually because the child balks at a particular assignment. The impatient voice is normally not a pleasant one. Sarcasm is often part of the impatience which is felt, and this needs to be avoided. This is when the parents need to reflect on the cause of their impatience and determine the best solution. As is the case for many parents, the display of impatience is often an attempt to correct or avoid

a mistake by the child. If, over time, we can learn to "speak in a pleasant" voice and avoid the trap of over-reacting to the mistakes which are a natural part of the learning process, we can move a step closer to developing the level of patience we would like to have.

As we grow as parents and teachers, the knowledge we gain from our various experiences allows us the opportunity to reflect on those things which allowed us to succeed and the things that hindered our development.

As I look back, I see that the development of my own patience, with regards to teaching children, is due to a larger understanding of the way in which they learn and develop. We can see that children will react more readily to the pleasant voices of their parents and teachers. They will respond when they are not pressured, and they will learn at their own pace. With patience, we can be sure that our musical experience will be a rich and rewarding one. **CS**



Andrew LaFreniere earned an MM in classical guitar performance in 1985 from the Hartt School of Music. He has studied with Alexander Bellow, Richard Provoost, Alan Spreenstebach and Oscar Ghiglia. He has studied Suzuki pedagogy with Frank Longay, Bill Kossler

and Jeanne Luedke.

From 1987 to the present, Mr. LaFreniere has been the director of the Suzuki Talent Education School of Sandy Hook, CT. The school offers guitar, piano and early childhood programs. He is a member of the Suzuki Association of the Americas guitar development committee. Andrew is a frequent guest clinician at Suzuki Institutes held throughout the U.S. He is currently a member of the guitar faculty at Western Connecticut State University, a post he has held since 1998.

Errata:

The 2010 Membership Directory does not include a separate listing for the Canadian province of Newfoundland. Please note the following members from Newfoundland appear incorrectly in other provincial listings:

Johnson, Jennifer	709-579-1160	V
19 Carrigan Hill, St. John's NL, CAN A1C 3Y7		I
Landy, Rachel Anne		V
4 Nunney Hill, St. John's NL, CAN A1C 1L6		I
Osborne, Evelyn, Ms	709-726-7268	VE
14 Howley Ave Ext, St. John's NL, CAN A1C 2T1		I
Smith, Christina, Ms	709-570-2359	VC
16 Maxse Street, St. John's NL, CAN A1C 2S7		I

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By Sally Gross

International Trainers Share Thoughts on Tone

Last October, twenty-one cello teacher trainers from all over the world met in Boston at the International Suzuki Association Teacher Trainers Conference. After many presentations on philosophy and on the teacher training approaches in the various regions, it was wonderful to sit down with the cellists, get a couple of instruments out and talk about—what else?—TONE. We all spend many hours in our teaching studios discussing various aspects of tone with our students, parents and also with teacher development participants. I know that I have a certain pretension and vocabulary that I use in my teaching to make a point. It was very refreshing to hear what other cello teachers do. I felt as if I was at an institute, just absorbing information.

Mr. Nakajima from Japan shared with us that he uses the first eight bars from Chorus from "Judas Maccabaeus" as his Tonalization exercise. He teaches it as printed in C Major, but also uses it in G Major, beginning on the D on the A string, asking the students to come up with their own fingerings. He asks for the melody to be played in many different positions.

Once the student progresses to Book Four, they are then asked to play the phrase beginning on the G string and then on the C string. Mr. Nakajima asks the student to have the same tone quality on all notes, regardless of what string they are on or what position they are in.

Mr. Nakajima also shared with us a bow hold exercise in which the bow is held horizontally with the tip of the bow touching the tip of the left index finger. This helps to develop a controlled bow hold (without being floppy and out of control).

Ruben Rivera from Lyon, France, had a very personal approach to TONE. "Scientists, ancient and modern religions as well as New Agers describe the world as VIBRATION. As musicians we have a unique opportunity to experience the world as sound vibration. Your tone is a manifestation or reflection of who you are.

Working on tone is working on the self. Working on the self is a search for self-knowledge. Self-knowledge or Gnosis is how we connect to the divine. This is the work of the Alchemist ... the search for gold!

Many of us are familiar with alchemical symbolism but few of us know about the use of sound and vibration in the Alchemists' endeavors. A secret word game (using sound vibration) known as "the language of the birds" gave these alchemists insight into commonly used words, revealing deeper levels of meaning and intention. I used this game to give some interesting insight into the word "tone." Notice that "tone" contains the word One. T-One can be easily transcribed by adding an A becoming At One, which by extension can bring to mind At-One-Ment or even Atonement, both of these terms ring of a sort of healing effect. Using "a tone" as a start we can be reminded of Aton the Egyptian concept of the one god. This concept was first introduced by the Pharaoh Akenaton which suspiciously sounds to my ears like Oc-Noten or the eight notes on an Octave scale. Completion! The "Atom" is also one of the building blocks for all creation.

These added meanings bring us back to the question at hand, to create a beautiful sound requires the letting go of who you think you are and becoming true and pure vibration, coming into alignment with T(he)-ONE. Creating a beautiful tone is the WORK of the "Alchemist" (a seeker of spiritual enlightenment) and a tool one can use to achieve the ultimate Philosophers' Tone!"

As we went around the room sharing our approaches to Tone and Tonalization, many of the same points came up, expressed in different ways. Tone exists in all things we do on the cello; however the tonalization exercise we create or the Book Two version we use is only a "vehicle to create a mindful awareness of tone production."

Tone and intonation are partners. With beautiful centered tone it is possible to have pitches that ring true. Without tone there is no true pitch. The ringing sound tonalization in Book One gives a simple

focus to hear the deep ringing sound and wake the cello sound up.

- "Less is More." Using a lot of bow does not necessarily make a tone better. One teacher puts their hands between the student's frog and tip to keep the taka taka te rhythm the correct length.
- Keep the Tonalization exercise simple and appropriate to student's level, so that the student can focus on their highway, a straight bow or their arm weight. Do not make it cumbersome with difficult to find left hand notes.
- The add-a-note scale is a wonderful variation on tonalization. The student begins with the tonic, then does a shoulder releasing circle bow and plays the first two notes on the same bow, then the first three notes on the same bow, etc. Do as many keys and octaves as appropriate to level. This is a great combination of left and right hand tonalization.
- Use imagery to connect to a child. What about colors? Food? Fabric? Weather? We each have our own learning styles and certain imagery will also have more meaning than another. Beth Cantrell shared a crayon drawing she uses for the student to see the tone.
- Bring beautiful tone into view by making a bad tone on purpose.
- We can certainly *hear* good tone. We can *see* good tone by watching the string spin. We should also teach our students to *feel* good tone. We teach this by not squeezing the bow, but letting the string spin through the bow hand. One can also feel the vibration of the string in the left hand if there is the right amount of weight in the fingers—not too hard, not too soft. Margaret Rowell said the proper left arm weight when in a piece of paper can be easily pulled from underneath the arm/hand/fingers as the arm is resting on the string.
- The teacher can reach around the student's body and play their cello, thereby teaching the student's body to feel the vibration. This is also a wonderful way to "sell" the cello sound to a potential new student.
- Encourage the student to become inquisitive about their tone. Explore and discover, like a chef in a kitchen, or like a master gardener. Tone is like a recipe: many ingredients have to be

present to have a tasty outcome; however if any one ingredient dominates the others it will be distasteful.

- Use the analogy of a toolbox in teaching ownership of tone. The teacher fills the tool box with such things as straight bows, heavy arms, bent bow thumbs, and the student must open the box and pull out the tool. If it is the wrong tool, put it back in and try another. Or perhaps more than one tool is needed to complete the job.
- Use the voice to teach the sound—sing while playing!
- Using the traditional 4-1-4-2+2-4-1-4 tonalization, play in 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th positions at which point continue with the intermediate position fingerings.
- In the winter months, playing a lot of ringing tones actually helps to loosen up the cello! - Gilda Barston
- The inner singing voice determines the tone. If a light humming voice is inside, that is the sound from the cello. It is not always the "natural" voice that we imagine inside that creates a deep tone. We can pretend to have a Pavarotti voice. To determine the sound inside, ask the cellist to sing the sound which is inside them. This will give a clue to the sound they are hearing. Focusing on the inner voice is a strong learning tool, which I find quicker and more satisfactory than outside manipulation ("use more weight", "closer to the bridge", etc.) - Tanya Carey

Finally Barbara Wampner reminded us all of Dr. Suzuki's drawing of the water spider, Hippopotamus, goldfish and tuna fish. Tuna tone should prevail. ☺



A native of the Chicago area, Sally Gross is currently Cello Director at the Western Springs School of Talent Education. She holds a Bachelor of Music degree from Northern Illinois University where she studied with Marc Johnson and a Masters of Music in Suzuki Pedagogy from Ithaca College where she completed her training with Carey Beth Hockett and Sanford Joan Reuning. Before recently returning to the Chicago area, Sally taught at the Suzuki String School of Guelph in Ontario for 23 years where she was also Artistic Coordinator. She is currently celebrating her 20th year as Cello Director of the Southwest Ontario Suzuki Institute. As a dual citizen of both the US and Canada, she was also the 2008 Conference Coordinator.

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Cello Teacher Trainers at the International Trainers Conference

By Mary Hofer

1989 to Present: My Experiences as a Suzuki Voice Teacher in Central Wisconsin



The first prenatal class in 1991

I realize how much my life has been affected by all of the wonderful people I have met while learning and teaching Suzuki Voice, and I am very grateful. One day my former students Daniel and Anna called me to have lunch with them while they were home from college on their holiday breaks. They live an hour away but still they wanted to visit with me and I felt honored. When I returned from lunch, there was a card in my mail from the parents of Karl, a Suzuki voice student of mine who graduated three years ago. Recently I went to a birthday party for the father of another one of my students, Johanna, who graduated five years ago. That evening, I had coffee with Sheila, one of my students who graduated two years ago. She was to leave soon to spend a semester in India!

It has always seemed so natural to combine the teaching of voice with the ideals of the Suzuki philosophy. Singing is an extension of speech and a natural to almost every human being.

My longtime voice teacher and mentor Marjorie Kampenga loved all of the different voices she was teaching. She always worked hard to find music that suited each of those unique voices and personalities. Her approach—her love of the human voice and the art of music—continues to inspire me daily. From Mrs. Kampenga, I inherited my belief that all children have the ability and the right to learn to sing well. Later, the fact that this very belief is embedded in the Suzuki philosophy has continued to impress me profoundly. While we are not all blessed with a Stradivarius instrument, we have all been endowed with a voice which can be a means of communication and self-expression. In his book *Nurtured by Love*, the parents bring their child to Dr. Suzuki and ask him if the child will respond to anything. “No, but he will become something ...,” replied Dr. Suzuki. “... he will become a noble person through his violin playing.” (Suzuki, 1969, p. 25).

All of my former students are fine human beings, and I believe the Suzuki philosophy played an important part in their development. As a Suzuki voice teacher and parent I have learned much and continue to marvel at the wonders of such a simple yet demanding method.

My History with Suzuki Method

I was first attracted to the Suzuki program in 1985. I was teaching elementary music (preschool through grade eight), and I had students who took Suzuki violin lessons and also excelled in academic studies. I found this very interesting. Then my sister started her son in Suzuki Violin lessons when he was three years old. I began to hear about what was happening in his weekly lessons. Soon I met my school children's Suzuki violin instructor Patricia D'Ercole, who encouraged me to create a Suzuki voice program. Ms. D'Ercole went to Finland and observed Dr. Päivi Kukkamäki's voice program and brought back a video of it for me.

Then I went to see Margery Aber, the founder of the University of Wisconsin—Stevens Point Suzuki program. Ms. Aber encouraged me to begin a voice program and introduced me to Dee Martz, the director of the UWSP Suzuki Program. Mrs. Martz encouraged me to audit Ms. D'Ercole's Suzuki teacher training and observe several Suzuki instructors at the American Suzuki Institute—Kyoko Fuller, Alice Joy Lewis, Kay Sloan and several others. As a result of these observations, my bachelor's degree in music, my experiences teaching music to elementary school children, my experiences teaching private lessons, plus my background in performance and the private voice lessons I continued to take, I felt ready to begin a Suzuki Voice program. Professor Emeritus Marjorie Kampenga, my voice instructor and long-time mentor, also encouraged me to begin the program.

In 1989, two years after Dr. Kukkamäki began her program in Finland, she sent me a copy of her Suzuki Voice program with ten young children ranging in age from three years to nine years. Students attended individual and group lessons. Parents attended the lessons and practiced with their children at home. Students also attended a monthly Saturday morning group class.

Some of my goals were and continue to be:

- To use the Suzuki philosophy as a means of teaching voice. The need to express one's self using the human voice instrument is rooted in basic primal sounds. The singing voice is an extension of the speaking voice, and, as a result, it is very natural to begin voice lessons at a very

early age—prenatal, if possible. I strongly believe every child can learn to sing well.

- To help children use natural vocal production. This includes encouraging children and parents to feel comfortable singing and to use their singing voice as a means of self-expression. We do this by providing children and their families with models of healthy vocal use.
- To expose children to the world of classical and folk vocal music. As with the other areas of student study, children learn and perform a wealth of literature thereby keeping both repertoires alive. Voice students are exposed to the poetry of the texts, and they are also given the opportunity to communicate the written text and develop an understanding of many cultures. Students learn to translate songs and to sing in a variety of languages. Currently my students have learned to sing Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star in Japanese, Korean, German, Hindi, Italian, Finnish and Chinese.

By November of 1989, I had 15 students.

A booklet and audiotape of folk songs provided the first repertoire. A copy of the booklet and a tape were given to each family. Dr. Kukkamäki generously shared Suzuki Voice Books One, Two and Three with me. The books contained many folk songs known throughout the United States as well as Finnish and other international folk songs. While Book One had been translated into English, Book Two was primarily in Finnish. Fortunately, Sisko Hyonen, a Suzuki Violin long-term teacher training student from Finland, was studying at the University of Wisconsin—Stevens Point, and she helped me translate some of the songs in Book Two from Finnish to English. In addition, with Dr. Kukkamäki's encouragement, I selected American folk songs that are an important part of our American heritage. Book Three is comprised of simple art songs from Baroque and Classical composers. As with the first three books, the developments of Levels Four and Five have benefited greatly from the collaborative assistance of teachers from around the world. I am truly grateful for this multicultural team approach to selecting repertoire for the Voice program.

Due to the unique inflections and pronunciation of each country's language, every Suzuki voice instructor must record their own listening tapes of the songs. This process can be difficult, time-consuming, and costly. Fortunately, I have an excellent, technically advanced set of parents that help me with this process—Kay and David Holz.

My first prenatal Suzuki Voice students began in 1991. Two families participated—moms, dads, a seven-year-old sibling, and a grandmother. The two families came together once a week to work on songs they would sing to their babies still developing in utero. Another focus of the lessons was to help the entire family feel comfortable using their own singing voices. Once the babies were born, the families came back to weekly classes and also joined the monthly Saturday morning group classes. There were then 25 Suzuki Voice students.

I began the second baby class in 1994 with five infants ranging in age from three to five months. At this point, there were a total of 35 students ranging in age from three months to 17 years of age.

With time, the older students' advancement and changing voices were important considerations that needed to be addressed. It is crucial for a voice teacher to understand students' vocal

and emotional needs. Students need to feel comfortable with the words and ideas that they will perform. As a result, for Books IV and V, Dr. Kukkamäki, Mette Heikkinen and Suzuki Voice Teachers from around the world, have developed an extensive repertoire from which each instructor can choose songs most appropriate for their individual students' needs and interests.

In 1990, I was invited to speak at the 1990 SAA convention in San Francisco, where I met Dr. Kukkamäki for the first time. I observed her teaching, attended all of her presentations and spent time speaking with her about her program. In 1994 I met Dr. Kukkamäki again in Chicago where I did a presentation and brought several of my students to perform. In 1997, through the generous help and support of the Aber Suzuki Center, I organized and presented a workshop and invited Dr. Kukkamäki to be a presenter. She brought several of her students to Stevens Point to work and perform with all 48 of my students. We had two days of master classes and rehearsals, and then we began touring schools and performing concerts in Stevens Point, Marshfield, and Junction City, Wisconsin. In the summer of 1998, Dr. Kukkamäki returned to Stevens Point to teach my students at the American Suzuki Institute and continue my teacher training. In 1999, 20 of my students and their parents went to Finland for two weeks. My students



Dr. Kukkamäki teacher training Book 1, 2006



American and Finnish students performing in Finland, 1999

and Dr. Kukkamäki's students prepared individual solos and group music before gathering in Finland where each of our students performed in concert as soloists and in ensemble. In 2001, Dr. Kukkamäki again returned to Stevens Point with some of her students and our combined students performed concerts together in Madison, Wisconsin Rapids, Marshfield, and Stevens Point, Wisconsin. This exchange of music, language, culture and friendship has been extremely rewarding and valuable to all of the students—truly an example of Dr. Suzuki's belief that the sharing of cultures and music can promote worldwide peace.

In October 2003, the International Suzuki Association approved the study of Suzuki Voice.

The summer of 2007 marked the 18th year of our Suzuki Voice Program at the Aber Suzuki Center of the University of Wisconsin—Stevens Point.

My Suzuki Voice students enjoy the following opportunities:

- Monthly recitals combine violin, viola, cello, piano and voice students. Students perform whenever they have polished their songs. The combination of instruments at these recitals gives my voice students and their parents the opportunity to experience a variety of Suzuki program instrumental and classical music. The Aber Suzuki Center has a fine staff of cello, piano, viola and violin teachers. They and their students provide support and inspiration for the Suzuki Voice program.
- Musical theatre is a very important part of American culture. Almost all of our high schools and community theaters do musical productions yearly. As a result, each year my students pick out a musical theatre song appropriate to their age and voice. They research the character and the story and they act out their songs during the performance.
- At monthly marathons, we review music from the Suzuki repertoire and supplementary group songs. Students are encouraged to sing solos they may be working on during an informal recital included in the marathon.
- Each year there are two important events combining all of the disciplines in the Aber Suzuki Center: Music of the Masters and the Spring Festival Concert.
- Voice students also perform at community and charity events.
- Almost all voice students in grades 6 through 12 compete in local, district, and state school solo and ensemble contests. Each student chooses music from a list of repertoire. Students in grades 4 through 12 also compete in Wisconsin Music Teachers Association local, district, and state contests where students are required to sing three songs, each from a different time period, and take a music theory test.

My Students' Achievements

- A 12-year-old student was one of six finalists for the Chicago Opera Idol contest.
- A 12-year-old student was chosen to perform as a soloist with the Milwaukee Symphony, Wisconsin's premiere professional orchestra and chorus.
- In 1998, three of my students performed in the first senior recital of our program. As of 2007, 20 of my students have performed senior recitals.
- 22 of my students have performed leading and/or supporting roles in high school and community theatre productions.
- Four students auditioned and were selected to participate in local adult and community choirs.
- Two students auditioned and were selected to sing in the Milwaukee (WI) Children's Choir.
- One student auditioned and was selected to sing in the Appleton Wisconsin Children's Choir.
- Five students auditioned and were chosen for the Wisconsin State Honors Choir.
- One student was awarded a vocal music scholarship to the University of Minnesota—Duluth.
- Two students auditioned and performed the role of Anahî in the University of Wisconsin—Marshfield/Wood County production of Gian Carlo Menotti's famous opera *Anahî and the Night Visitors*.
- Eight students have placed first at the Wisconsin Music Teachers Association state-level contest.
- Three students placed second at the Wisconsin Music Teachers Association state-level contest.

- Senior high school students often choose to perform a Senior Recital to celebrate the culmination of their Suzuki experience. This is a very big commitment for each senior student as they are often members of their high school choirs and participate in the school musical and other extracurricular activities.

Some of the most important lessons I have learned and cherish about the Suzuki method include:

- The importance of the parents attending each lesson is immeasurable. When a student does a small task well, the priceless look of pride in their accomplishment passes between the child and the parent.
- Camaraderie develops between parent and child when they have practiced and accomplished



Mary Hofer directing during the monthly marathon, 2009.

a task together. The look of joy is so wonderful to witness, and the sense of confidence both the student and parent feel is important.

- The naturalness of learning music by ear and repetition is incorporated into the Suzuki method and is particularly well suited to learning to sing. Over my years of teaching Suzuki Voice, I have been amazed at how quickly my students learn different languages, analyze tone quality, and catch musical nuances. I love my students' enthusiasm for going to YouTube or iTunes and listening to classical music.
- The significance of repetition and of taking time to learn are also very important Suzuki principles. Sometimes we are in such a hurry to get things completed that we forget to value of the process of learning—that daily practice and repetition are the best way to learn not just music but to also learn how to learn. The Suzuki philosophy reminds me in my teaching and in my family life to slow down and enjoy the process of learning. Suzuki is not just a method for teaching my students, but also a way of parenting my children. ☺



Mary Hofer is the first Suzuki Voice Teacher Trainer officially recognized by the SAA. Mary also serves as the SAA representative to the International Voice Committee, working with that Committee to guide the overall development of Suzuki Voice. In addition to being recognized in 2009 as an SAA Voice Teacher Trainer, Mary has earned certification through Level IV (2001-2006) in the European Suzuki Association training system.

In the summer of 2009 Mary taught Unit 2 Teacher Training at the American Suzuki Institute. She helped organize and assisted with teacher training courses at the Institute in 2005, 2006 and 2008. She has been a presenter at several SAA Conferences over the past 20 years. Mary has developed the Suzuki Voice Program at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point Aber Suzuki Center over the past twenty years. Prior to teaching Suzuki Voice, Mary taught pre-school through Grade 8 General Music, Junior High Chorus, and private voice lessons for ten years. A soprano, Mary has attended seminars led by the eminent vocal pedagogue Owen Brown, and participated in opera workshops at Oglethorpe Park, West Virginia, and American University, Washington, DC. She holds a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

Mary and her husband Paul live in Stevens Point with their two children, Elizabeth and Timothy.



Students with Mary Hofer and Dr. Kukkamäki, 2008 Teacher Training.



Dr. Kukkamäki and Mary Hofer, 1997.

By Kelly Williamson

The Flutes Are Flying!

Literally and figuratively, Suzuki flute students and teachers are sending their instruments to the skies! Following a fall fund-raiser for the Argentinean Flute Orchestra (directed by Fernando Formigo of San Martin de los Andes), donated flutes from Colorado, Manitoba, Guelph, and Taiwan were flown to Patagonia to find new homes with hard-working flute students.

Money raised by ten Suzuki studios also enabled the purchase of an alto flute for Fernando's group. Mr. Di Zhao of Di Zhao flutes offered us an alto and a bass flute both at the dealer price. The alto was purchased during the International Teacher Trainers' conference in Massachusetts, and it joined the previously-loved flutes (donated) for the trip down to Argentina. We had enough money to buy the bass flute in late November. It was delivered promptly and was traveled down to the Lima festival in January, where Fernando and his student Martin attended classes. All of the teachers and students who were present during the first week of the festival had a chance to play both instruments—and also have their pictures taken playing the bass! It was a marvelous opportunity for all ... I am hopeful that money can be collected to buy a second bass flute for the Suzuki Association of Peru, so that teacher members can borrow it for their students' use. Winivere Roman, a fine teacher in Arequipa who has a large group of students, explained that there isn't even an instrument available for rental in Lima, let alone in Arequipa. Fernando is making good use of both lower flutes in his orchestra; it would be wonderful if more students in other regions were able to have access to such opportunities.

Here is the story of one of the other donated flutes.

Diary of a Donated Flute

September 21, 2009

Hello! Please let me introduce myself. I am a Yamaha flute. I have heard that some flutes are given names by their owners, but it so happens that my owner never gave me a personal name. (Since I'm a flute, I wouldn't necessarily have expected they would—but I mention it just in case you wondered.)

I was made in the Yamaha factory, and in 1995, I was bought

by her parents for Miss Ivy Huang, who lived in Taiwan at that time. In 1996 I went to North York (Toronto), Canada with Ivy and her family. The family lived North York for three years, during which time we had lessons every week and practiced consistently. Together we passed the audition and entered North York Honor Band, and we also played in North York Flute Ensemble. Ivy even played me in university auditions, even though by that time, her artistry had developed considerably, and she might have expected to be playing a professional instrument. I think we sounded well together, though, and I did my best to help her to shine. When we auditioned at McMaster University, we met David Gerry for the first time. David would be Ivy's teacher at university, and also her teacher in her Suzuki pedagogy study. (By the way, I put a lot of air miles in with Ivy—from 1996 to 1999, we traveled back and forth between Canada and Taiwan each year for summer vacation. I consider myself fortunate to be a flute with a wide world view.)

In the summer of 1999, I went back to Taiwan permanently. Ivy had been accepted at the university, and her parents took her to choose a new Nagahara flute. After that, I enjoyed a few quiet years in retirement until Ivy came back to Taiwan last year and started her own Suzuki studio. I then returned to active duty as a loaner instrument, and have enjoyed making music once again.

One day, and to my great surprise, I received some amazing news. I learned that I would be going on a long journey to South America, some 20,000 kilometers from Taiwan. More exciting still: because the shipping would be so costly by air, I would be going by sea instead! I had never been on the ocean before ... it would be a real adventure. I certainly hoped I would not be seasick.

The day to leave Ivy finally came. Of course I was sad, but I was very pleased to be seeing new sights and learning new things at this stage in my career. My journey took me first to Canada, via Hong Kong, Tacoma and Vancouver. Once I arrived in London, Ontario, I joined two other donated flutes who had come from Manitoba and the United States. All of us were then taken to Lima, Peru, by plane, to find new homes among the teachers who attend the Suzuki festival. We traveled together in a suitcase, well packed among clothes so that we

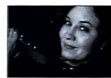
wouldn't bang around and get bruised. We took advantage of the long trip to get lots of rest—at my age, I appreciate that, even though the brand-new bass flute was itching to get out of the case and start making some music!

To make a long and exciting story somewhat shorter, I met my new owner, Martin, who came all the way from Patagonia to attend master classes in Lima. He is a hard-working student, just like Ivy. In addition to playing with the student orchestra in the big concerts that took place, he also had the opportunity to be soloist with a teacher orchestra, playing Vivaldi's II Gardellino concerto. I was very proud to watch and listen from the sidelines while he played his faithful old flute in its final concert with him. I appreciated his attention to the feelings of his instrument, in choosing to make their goodbye performance such a splendid one. I knew that I had enjoyed care and respect in Ivy's hands for so many years. I was very glad to be going to a new owner who had the same ideas about a flute.

Martin generously donated his old flute to a program in Huancavelica, Peru. Their teacher's flute had been stolen when they first arrived in Lima, so the gift was most sincerely appreciated. I hear that those students and teachers in Huancavelica are very hard-working, indeed. I wished my colleague instrument many joys and successes in his new home, as I go on to great adventures myself, with Martin in Patagonia! ☺

*If any teachers are interested in donating flutes, having a fund-raiser in support of students in Latin America who need instruments, or in partnering with a Latin American program to share ideas, stories, and inspiration, please write me at kelly@amaryllis.ca.

Many thanks to the following teachers and their students for making the Argentinean Flute Orchestra fund-raiser a success: Vicki Blechta (Ontario, Canada), Honor Gourlik (Manitoba, Canada), Noelle Perrin (New Jersey, USA), Ivy Huang (Taiwan), David Gerry (Ontario, Canada), Kenichi Ueda (Ontario, Canada), Sasha Garver (New Mexico), and several other supporters who were inspired by our efforts and wished to participate.



Kelly Williamson holds a BMus (performance) with Distinction from McGill University, and a MMus from l'Université de Montréal. Influential teachers include Tim Hutchins, Denis Bluteau, Toshio Takahashi, Geoffrey Gilbert and Peter Lloyd. She was a freelance musician in Montréal for many years, maintaining a studio of twenty-five private students, and was also Suzuki Flute

Coordinator at the McGill Conservatory, before relocating to London, Ontario. Kelly has been a frequent clinician and festival adjudicator, and is invited to teach at workshops in Canada, the US, South America and Tanzania. She was appointed as a Teacher Trainer in May 2006, and contributes regularly to the ASI.

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Welcoming Ontario



Compiled by Whitney Kelley and Pam Brasch

It has been a long journey but the dreams of its founders have become a reality. Coming together within a community of diversity that spans great distances, but united by strong Suzuki bonds, the Suzuki Talent Education Association of Ontario (SAO) has grown in leadership and membership, becoming a thriving and prominent Suzuki organization in eastern Canada. This spring, after the Suzuki Association of Ontario completed a thorough application process, the SAA is pleased and proud to announce that the SAO will be joining our family of Chapter Affiliates as our first Canadian Chapter.

A Little Background

The SAO celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2009, but its roots extend even further back to the 1970s. The Suzuki Method first appeared in Ontario within small pockets of teachers primarily centered in

London, Guelph, Hamilton, Toronto and Kingston. These teachers began meeting together with teachers from the United States in the Northeastern Festivals which soon inspired the formation of institutes, the Southwestern Ontario Suzuki Piano Teachers' Association, the Toronto Suzuki Association, and the first Ontario Suzuki Newsletter.

In 1989, SAA President Dorothy Jones challenged Suzuki communities to have a celebration and conference honoring Dr. Suzuki in November of that year. In response, the Toronto Suzuki Association organized a conference for all Suzuki teachers and families in Ontario, an event that marked the genesis of the Ontario Suzuki Association. By the next conference in 1990, the OSA was officially created, becoming incorporated and renamed as the Suzuki Talent Education Association of Ontario (or Suzuki Association of Ontario for

short) in 1994. With this step, the SAO became and remains the only provincial organization of Suzuki teachers in Canada.

What SAO Offers

As the SAO has grown throughout the past few decades, the opportunities and resources it offers have also expanded. From its very formation, the SAO has annually hosted a major conference including guest speakers, instrument and non-instrument specific sessions, workshops for students and parents, as well as a final concert accompanied by a faculty orchestra. In earlier years, SAO invited such Suzuki pioneers as John Kendall, Bill Starr, Sandy Reuning and Bill Preucil as guest speakers. Each year the conference is hosted in a different area, rotating among Toronto, the southwest, eastern and northern regions of the province. Both in the past and continuing today, the SAO conference has remained a centralized event in the SAO.



To encourage participation in SAA events and training, the SAO offers several types of scholarships for members. The Association has initiated financial awards for students participating in the SAA conference orchestras and ensembles, as well as scholarships for teachers pursuing further SAA training. In addition, in memory of one of the founding members of the Toronto Suzuki Association, the Sheila Hall van Gijn scholarships are given to help families attend summer institutes for the first time. These scholarships have continued to provide invaluable opportunities and experiences for Suzuki students since 1983.

Other valuable resources are available to everyone through the SAO website (www.suzukiontario.org), including a teacher directory and location service, links to member schools, a listing of workshop clinicians and institutes, an electronic copy of the newsletter, downloadable forms for the annual conference in Ontario, professional development opportunities, and further information about the Suzuki method and the SAO. Furthermore, the SAO offers quarterly newsletters, a group medical, dental and disability insurance, and promotional options through their website, teacher directory and flyers.

Future Goals

Covering a larger region than any other Chapter Affiliate, the SAO must continually work to breach the gap of distance among their members. While this remains a constant challenge, SAO board members are working to create a system to utilize SKYPE or other online event participation for their events. Also in the works is the possibility of travel bursaries to enable participants from opposite ends of the province to attend SAO hosted events. With these developments, the SAO not only offers further education and opportunities for their members but



Top to bottom: Group tour at Seneca in the early '80s; Dr. Suzuki with students; SAO Board meeting in 2008. Facing page: Cello class at 2008 Conference.

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is also able to facilitate the expansion of an interactive community devoted to sharing in the Suzuki experience.

Another exciting development is a mentorship and networking program designed for new teachers, offering support and guidance in the start of their studios and continuance of Suzuki training. And similarly, the SAO plans to develop a series of events and articles designed to educate, connect, and encourage the role of parents and families in Suzuki training. Members of the SAO are excited about what has already been accomplished and look forward to see the great things that will occur in the years to come!

At the SAA's 2010 Annual General Meeting, Ellen Berry recognized the SAO on behalf of the SAA Board of Directors. The SAO is the newest and tenth SAA Chapter Affiliate and the first Canadian group to be recognized. Vicki Blechta, SAO Chair, accepted the affiliation certificate. Ellen stated: "The SAA is pleased to award Chapter Affiliate status to the Suzuki Association of Ontario, which celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2008. The SAO is the largest organization of Suzuki teachers in Canada, and represents the entire province covering 415,000 square miles, which is about the combined area of Texas and California."

Congratulations to the SAO for completing this step of Chapter Affiliation with the SAA! ☺

SAA wishes to thank the Suzuki Association of Ontario for its service to the SAA for many years and in numerous ways. Thanks to the SAO for building and nurturing leadership on the provincial level and sharing the skills and talents of its leaders with the entire Suzuki community!

For more information about the SAO or for contacts, please visit their website at <http://www.suzukiontario.org>.

Many thanks to SAO Chair Vicki Blechta and other board members for providing information, as well as the SAO's archivist, Wendy Seravalle-Smith, for compiling historical background.

SAO Member Schools

These are among the many studios, programs and schools who are members of the SAO and the SAA:

Fethiöcke Suzuki School
Guelph School of Music
Hamilton Suzuki School of Music
North York Suzuki School of Music
Oakville Suzuki Association
Toronto Flute School

Fun Facts

- The SAO currently includes 153 members and 10 member schools.
- Dr. Suzuki visited London, Ontario in 1978, a trip that sparked stronger bonds and understanding of the Suzuki Method for teachers in Ontario at the time. (The Japanese tour group subsequently visited Ontario twice, sponsored by the Seneca College program.)
- Numerous members of SAO provided valuable advice and assistance to the SAA for the 2007 Leadership Retreat at Nottawasaga Resort in Ontario—SAA's first large event to take place in Canada.
- The SAO's first Chair was Linda Judiesch, followed by David Gerry, Dorothy Jones, Gail Lange, Susan Gibbon, Elayne Ras, and its current Chair, Vicki Blechta.

SAO members, past and present, have a long history of involvement in and support for the SAA!

- Former SAA president and Early Childhood Education founder Dorothy Jones is from London, Ontario. Among many honors she was awarded in May a SAA "Creating Learning Community" award for her service to Early Childhood Education.
- For many years, Daphne Hughes was the director of the Guelph Suzuki Institute which became the Southwestern Ontario Suzuki Institute. She was a key member of the SAA Teacher Development Teams which developed the Teacher Trainer Application process and the *Every Child Can!* course. (Now in western Canada, Daphne continues her contributions as a member of the Suzuki Principles in Action course development team.) Daphne has also served on the SAA Board.
- David Gerry is the SAA representative to the ISA Flute Committee. He is currently conducting research at McMaster University with Dr. Laurel Trainor, which is providing evidence that Suzuki Early Childhood education improves babies' development in numerous areas.
- Gail Lange is a recent past Board member and Conference Piano Coordinator. She currently serves on the Suzuki Principles in Action Committee and the Teacher Development Committee.
- Ellen Berry is a current SAA Board member.
- Susan Gagnon just completed a very busy term on the SAA Conference Team as Chamber Music Coordinator. Margot Jewell also completed a term as SAA Conference Violin Coordinator at the same time. Both did stellar work!
- Vicki Blechta has joined the SAA Conference Team in the Flute area for 2012-2014.
- Current Ontario-based SAO members who serve as SAA Teacher Trainers include Paule Barsalon, David Evenchick, Susan Gagnon, David Gerry, Sally Gross (also 2008 SAA Conference Coordinator!), Karen Kinnett (SAA Violin Committee), Gail Lange and Dorothy Jones, Elayne Ras and Valery Lloyd-Watts.

Sharing the Love of My Country



By Malgosia Lis

Year 2010 marks the bicentennial anniversary of Chopin's Birthday. If you are, as I am, a person of Polish origin, this anniversary is something to behold. To celebrate I would like to share my Chopin and his Poland with my fellow teachers.

I was born and educated in Poland; I came to United States at the age of 23. While I have been living here for almost 20 years now, the country of my birth still looms large within me. As the old saying goes: "You can take a Pole out of Poland but you can't take Poland out of a Pole."

Chopin is and always has been a very celebrated figure in Polish culture. Living in Poland one does not have to be a musician or a music lover to be intimately familiar with his music; Chopin and his art are a constant presence. The examples are endless: Chopin's music is used in movies, especially in A major op. 40 no. 1 mark the beginning of daily news announcements on Polish Radio. Here are some more examples:

When Poland was invaded by Nazi forces on September 1st, 1939, the Polish Radio played an important role in boosting public morale. Chopin music was omnipresent during those terrible weeks. In fact, the last live broadcast on Polish radio, on September 23, 1939, was Chopin's Nocturne in C sharp Minor, played by a young pianist named Wladyslaw Szpilman¹, until his playing was interrupted by German bombing. The same piece, played by the same pianist, was aired when broadcasting resumed six years later, when the war was over.

If you ever travel to Poland by the way of Polish Airlines LOT, you will experience the presence of Chopin first hand. As you enter the plane, Chopin's music plays in the background—beautiful mazurkas, preludes, and waltzes.

On board you will find the LOT Magazine, *Kalendasepce*, which lists many attractions available to you in Poland. One of them is the famous Chopin Summer Concert series in Warsaw's beautiful Lazienki Park² (Royal Baths), where avid concertgoers and Chopin fans have a chance to listen to piano recitals every Sunday at 12 and 4 p.m. The audience sits on park benches or simply on the grass, and listens to music coming from under the Chopin monument. The concerts take place rain or shine.

You will also read about recitals taking place in Żelazowa Wola³, Chopin's birthplace. While the Lazienki concerts feature well-known artists as well as new rising stars, the Żelazowa Wola concerts are reserved for only the most famous and established pianists.

While you relax on the plane and read about the concerts you might be served a shot of vodka on ice. The name of the vodka? Chopin Vodka, of course!

When the flight attendant brings your ear phones you might want to consider listening to all-Chopin Channel!!! When you finally land in Warsaw eight hours later you will land at the Chopin Airport. You might even exit the plane through Terminal I called.... Etude!

Chopin Competitions, taking place in Warsaw every four years, are transmitted live on Polish TV and Radio, starting with the first round. The first Competition I remember vividly was 1975 when young 17-year-old Polish pianist Krystian Zimmerman took the first prize. Overnight, he became a national hero. In 1980 Poland was just as divided as the Chopin Competition Jury over the young pianist Ivo Pogorelich³. Those who did not know much about music heatedly discussed his attire and habit of chewing gum on stage.

It is only natural that Chopin's music is a constant presence in my studio. I wait, often impatiently, for my little students to grow and reach the level at which they are ready to play and discover the richness and the beauty of his music, and the joys, and challenges that come with playing Chopin.

It is my strong belief that getting to know a composer as a person and to know the world he lived in, are the keys to true understanding of that composer's music. This can't be truer with Chopin, or with any of the big romantic composers for that matter. In general, the music, poetry and art of that period had everything to do with feelings, expression and love of one's country.

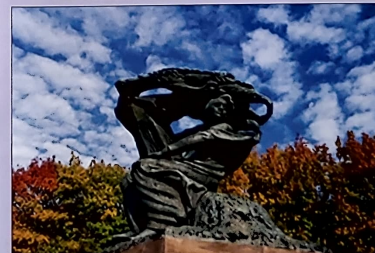
Those of us who would like to get to know Chopin more intimately are very fortunate. He left numerous letters to his family and friends which were scrupulously saved by them. We are also fortunate in the fact that Chopin was a very gifted writer and loved to write. While it is impossible to go in great detail through Chopin's whole life I will try to show Chopin through his own words and the words of his closest friends and acquaintances.



Left: Royal Baths Palace and Park
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http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Poland_Warsaw_SCSkLazienki_Palace.jpg



Below: Royal Baths in summer 1863,
painted by Marcin Zaleski (1796-1877)
Public domain image
http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Widok_palacu_w_Lazienkach_Letem.jpg



Chopin Monument in Royal Baths, photo courtesy Malgosia Lis



Chopin International Airport
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Zelazowa Wola. Images on this page courtesy of www.chopin.pl
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Chopin's Boarding School in 1824. Image courtesy of www.chopin.pl



Justyna Chopin, 1782-1861



Mikolaj (Nicolas) Chopin, 1771-1844

The Polish years 1810 to 1830

Fryderyk Chopin was born in the village of Zelazowa Wola in Poland in 1810, to Mikolaj (Nicolas) and Justyna Chopin. He was the second of four children and the only boy. Chopin's father, who was French, immigrated to Poland at the age of sixteen in 1787 and had served in Poland's National Guard during the Kościuszko's Uprising. The question of the date on which Fryderyk Franciszek Chopin entered the world has never been satisfactorily resolved; according to his own written testimony it was March 1st; according to the official entry in the baptismal register of parish church, it was 29th of February. The place of his birth, however, is beyond dispute: P elazowa Wola, a Mazovian village lying on the River Urata, 54 kilometers west of Warsaw, belonging at that time to the family of Count Skarbek to whom Chopin's mother was related and by whom she was brought up. Mikolaj and Justyna married in 1806. In October 1810 Mikolaj Chopin was awarded a position at the Warsaw Lyceum (secondary school), and moved with his family to Warsaw. Chopin was only a few months old. The Chopin family's first apartment was located in the Saxon Palace, in the right wing. Soon after Chopin's father was appointed as a headmaster of a prestigious boarding school.

It seems that all of Chopin's family was musical. Chopin's father played the flute and violin and his mother played the piano. His earliest teacher was his older sister Ludwika (Louise), herself a talented pianist and writer. Chopin's childhood was a very happy one. He was adored by all his sisters and parents and admired by all for his musical gift. Franz Liszt relates in 1852:

The environment in which Chopin entered the world and developed as if in a snug and secure little nest was suffused with an atmosphere of accord, peace and industry; so those examples of simplicity, purity and delicacy always remained for him the sweetest and dearest.

Much later, in his Parisian years, Chopin avowed: "I am always one foot at home with you."

Letter to Father, on his name day: December 6th 1817:

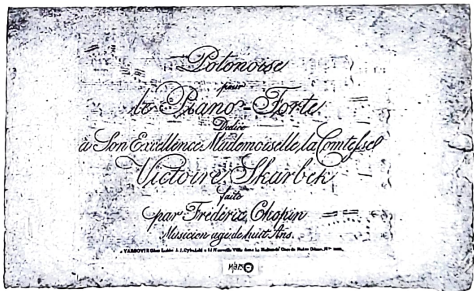
(In Polish) Kochany Papiu! Lubię by mi łatwiej było wymyślić uczucia moje, gdyby je mówczewymi tonami wyrazić można, gdy jednak



Wojciech Żywny
 Image on this page courtesy of www.chopin.pl



Jozef Elsner



In early 1818 Warsaw Journal published the first review of the edition of the Polonoise in G minor.

in najlepszy koncert przywiązaniu mego ku Tobie, Kochany Papiu, obłąk nie potrafi, użyć muszę prostych wyrazów serca mego, aby Ci najczelniej złożyć i przywiązania synowskiego hołd złożyć. F. Chopin. Dnia 4 grudnia 1818

(Translation) Dear Papa, I could express my feelings more easily if they could be put into notes of music, but as the very best concert would not begin to cover my affection for you, dear Daddy, I must use the simple words of my heart, to lay before you my utmost gratitude and affection. F. Chopin. On the 6th day of December 1818.

Very early, the family realized that young Fryderyk possessed unusual musical gifts. By the age of six, the boy was

composing original pieces that showed prodigious ability. His parents arranged for him to take piano instruction from Wojciech Żywny, a great and eccentric musician (who was really a violinist first and a pianist second), who wore stained, mismatched clothing and whose big nose, into Chopin's words, "always seem to come into the room before his owner." Żywny taught the boy the works of the classical composers, Bach, Mozart and Beethoven, but with an ear open to new ideas and impressions—beauty, imagination and emotion. Emphasis was placed on color, tone and dynamics. Also learning under Żywny at the same time was Ludwika, with whom Fryderyk played four-hands.

Chopin's first works were published in 1817, when he was only seven years old. His Polonoise in A Flat, published when Chopin was eleven, was dedicated to his teacher, Żywny.

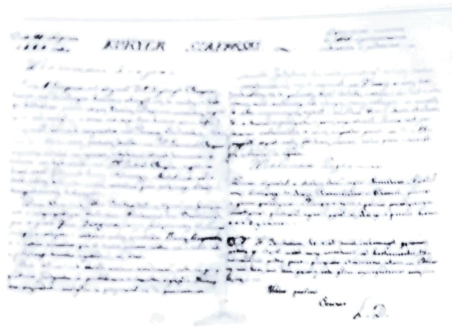
In early 1818 Warsaw Journal published the first review of the edition of the Polonoise in G minor:

The composer of this Polish dance, a young boy only eight years of age [...] a true musical genius: not only does he play the most difficult pieces on the piano forte, with the greatest ease and exceptional taste, but he is also the composer of several dances and variations, by which musical experts are constantly amazed, above all given the childish age of their writer. Had that young boy been born in Germany or France, he would doubtless have already attracted the attention of all social spheres; may this mention serve as an indication that geniuses also arise on our soil, it is just that the lack of broad publicity conceals them from the public.

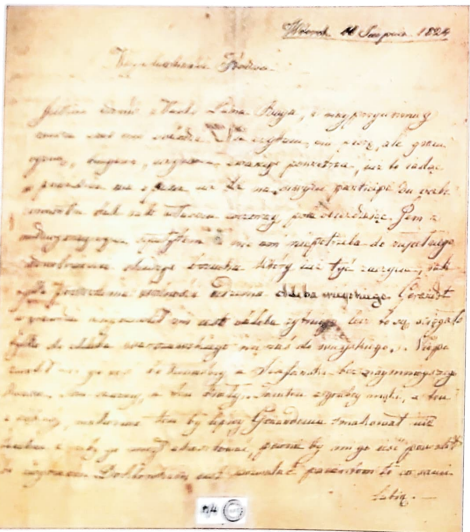
He was often invited to play at aristocratic parties and at charitable events. After one such event Warsaw Journal wrote: "performing on the piano was the young Chopin, a child of eight years, who promises, so the experts claim, to replace Mozart!"

In 1822, at the age of 12 Chopin ended music lessons under Żywny and began to perfect his musical training privately; he took counterpoint and composition lessons from Jozef Elsner; he also learned to play the organ from Václav Würfel. Chopin was very fortunate having Elsner as his teacher. Elsner was at that time one of the most prodigious composers. His works included symphonies, masses and operas yet he somehow understood Chopin's exclusive love for piano. Interestingly, Chopin's piano lessons ended with Żywny; he never again took formal piano lessons, yet at the age of 19 he was a fully formed pianist, writing his Etudes Op. 10, pieces that give every pianist 180 years later plenty technical problems to solve.

Chopin spent his childhood summers in the Polish countryside in the village of Szafarnia, where he absorbed folk music of the Polish region of Mazovia. He possessed keen intelligence and a true literary ability as well as a talent for mimicry. He wrote and performed



Szafrania Column, August 19, 1824
Images on this page courtesy of www.chopin.pl



Letter to Parents, dated Tuesday, August 16, 1814

concert plays for the amusement of his family, often making good-humored fun of famous people of his time. The many letters from that period were written in a form of a newspaper which he called "Szafrania Column" (*Kuisek Szafranski*) parodying the Warsaw Courier (*Kuisek Warszawski*). Those letters are mostly a deluge of schoolboy gags and silliness with just a few more sensible items in them.

15 August. At a musical gathering in *Szafrania* of a dozen or so persons and half persons, a star turn was given by Mr. Pichon equine; he played a Frenchish Kalkbrenner concerto, which made a lesser impression, particularly on the small personages, than the Zydok (Little Jew, a folk song), played by the same Mr. Pichon.

20 August. At Olsow a harvest festival was held. The entire village gathered in front of the manor amused themselves truly, particularly after vodka, and the girls, in a squeaky, false serenade song sang "Pierde dwoem koczki w blawo, nosza pany w szarym slowo." (At the manor ducks in the man, our lady all in gold attire.)

He enjoyed copying folk tunes into his music notebook. The folk music of Mazovia stayed with him all his life and he kept contact with that period through his Mazurkas and Polonaises.

LETTER FROM MAZOWSKE: 19 of August, 1814, to Wilhelm Kolberg.

Dear Wilus. Thanks for remembering me; but on the other hand I am annoyed with you, that you are such a mean and hoard, etcetera, etcetera and only write such a strap to me. Were you short of paper and pens or did you begrudge the ink?

I am enjoying myself in the country and you are not the only one that rides a horse because I can stick on one too. Don't ask how well; but I can, enough for the horse to go slowly whenever I prefer while I sit fearfully on his back; like a monkey on a bear. Till now I haven't had any falls because the horse hasn't thrown me off; but if ever should wound me to tumble off I may do easily!

I won't bother you with my affairs, because I know they won't interest you. The flies often alight on my lofty nose but that's unimportant because it's rather a custom of these important beasts. The gnats bite me; but that doesn't matter, because it's not on the nose. (...) I read my letter therefore without compliments but amicably keep well, dear Wilus, and please do write to me. We shall meet in 4 weeks. I embrace you heartily. Your sincere friend F. Chopin.

In Warsaw, together with his sister Emilia, he wrote and staged on his father's name-day a short comedy *Omyłka, czyli Mniemany filat* (The Error, or the Presumed Joke). He also "founded" the children's Literary Entertainment Society, modeled on the Warsaw Society for the Advancement of the Arts and Sciences; he became the "president", while the boarders in his father's school were the members. His sister Emilia was the secretary. According to family friend, Jozefa Koscielska (later: Wodzinska), "the fact that little Erdzde was already considered to be the best pianist in Warsaw gave him less appeal in our eyes than the fact that none of the boys was so eager to joke and have fun than he."

It was around his 15th birthday that he composed the Variations in E major on *Der Schweizerbühl*, dedicated to Katarzyna Sosnowska, wife of the legendary Polish general, the first versions of the Mazurka in A flat major Op. 7 No. 4 and A minor Op. 17 No. 1, and the Polonaise in G sharp minor, dedicated to Ludwika Dupon, with whom he often played four-hands duets and Polonaise in G Sharp Minor dedicated to his childhood friend Wilhelm Kolberg. Also composed at this time were a number of mazurkas, waltzes, polonaises and marches. Many of those were written into the album of Izabela Grabczowska, which was lost in St. Petersburg. A few can be found in the newly issued Polish National Edition of all Chopin works available from Theodore Presser Company.

At the age of 16 Chopin enrolled in the Music Conservatoire of Warsaw University and now officially continued his music studies under the direction of Jozef Elsner. Elsner became not only Chopin's teacher and mentor but a dear friend as well. They maintained regular correspondence until Chopin's death. The fruits of his studies under Elsner included the Variations on a theme from Mozart's *'Don Giovanni* ("La ci darem la mano") in B flat major Op. 2, with a dedication to Tytus Woyciechowski, one of Chopin closest and most devoted friends. Chopin's other close friend from that period was Jan Bialoblocki. The wealth of correspondence between them reveals Chopin as a mischievous boy, full of life and of humor tinged with some irony.

Letter to Jan Bialoblocki, January 8, 1827.

Respected Mr. Jan!
You are not worthy, you sound like Fogwee me for being compelled to use in my indignation a title so justly belonging to you. You are not worthy that I should extend to you a hand with a pen in it! This is my gratitude for the bloody sweat I endured in buying Miklowice, or those tickets? This is a response to my New Year wishes? Yes, please, and confess that I am right in saying you are not worthy that I should extend a hand to you! The only motive which impels me to write to you today is to acquit myself of the suspicion or judgment which might fall on me on account of the money you left with me. Perhaps you think that I spent it during the carnival at some friends' little ball, or that I have converted the rites of Bacchus into something worthy of a son of Apollo! Mistaken notion! Low thoughts! I have bought you two awns from Friszheit¹⁰, with which you ought to be pleased. It is true that they are for a female voice, but as I know, or at least can imagine, how squeakily you must sing, my dear life, when your leg hurts you—they are just the things for you! (...) The sledging is fairly good; they have been running about Warsaw with little bells for four days; there have been a few accidents, such as usually accompanies these moments. For instance, a shaft hit some body on the head and killed her; horses have bolted, sledges have been smashed and so on. (...) *Ms. Nymnauwka* gives a concert this week. It is to be on Friday, and prices are raised. I shall be there for sure and will tell you about her reception and playing. Write to me! Give me a kiss, Dear Life!

To the same, March 14th, 1827.
Beloved Jan!
Are you alive? Or not? Glory be to God; it's more than three months since you wrote a word to me. This appears to confirm the tale that is told about you in Warsaw with mourning and tears. And do you know what they say? They say that you are dead! We all had cried and *Jedrzejewicz*¹¹ had written a panegyric¹² for the courier and suddenly came the thunderclap that you are alive! So, having dried my tear-worried eyelids I take up my pen to inquire of you, are you alive or did you die? If you are dead, please let me know, and I will tell the cook, for ever since she heard about it, she has been saying her prayers. It may be a case of cupid's dart; for though she is an aged dame, our *Jozefina* is, when you were in Warsaw, you impressed her so that on hearing of your death she kept on repeating for a long while: "what a young



Emilia, 1812-1827



Ludwika, 1807-1855



Izabela, 1811-1881
Images on this page courtesy of www.chopin.pl

gentleman that was? Handsomer than all the other young gentlemen that come here! Neither Mr. Woyciechowski, no Mr. Jedzejewski is so handsome, none of them, none! (...) Well, now, leaving all that aside, I'll come to the point: we have illness in the house. Emilia has been in bed for four weeks. She has got a cough and has begun to spit blood and Mama is frightened. Malcz ordered bloodletting, sinapiams¹, sulphure, barres, barres! All this time she has been eating nothing, she has grown so thin that you wouldn't know her, and is only now beginning to come to herself a little. You can imagine what it has been like in the house. You'll have to imagine it because I can't describe it for you.

The years 1817 and 1818 were ridden with personal losses. First Chopin's youngest sister, Emilia, died of tuberculosis. Less than a year later his dear friend Jan Bialoblocki died. Young Fryderyk took the losses hard. To help him out of the depression that descended upon him his parents urged him to go to Berlin with the friend of the family Professor Feliks Jansick.

LETTER FROM BERLIN September 12, 1828:

My dearest Parents and sisters, I am well and since Tuesday they give something new in a theatre every day, as if on purpose for me. I have already heard many operas but Handel's *Oratorio* is none to the ideal that I have formed of great music. (...) Today at dinner I was seated next the German professor, Herr Lehman. I noticed him his fingers? I had to use two hands to break my dinner table, he cracked his with his one paw. Then he talked across me to Jansicki and got so excited that he waved his fingers over my plate and strove it with crumbs. I sat there on thorns while he moved up my plate and afterwards had to wipe it off with my napkin. He had a large and clumsy nose as well. (...) My friend says Berlin women are beautiful but he hasn't a jutting snout of sense! They dress, that's true but it's pitiful to see the gorgeous muslins on such dowdy images. I have seen all there was to see. I am coming back to You. Your sincerely affectionate Fryderyk.



Tytus Wojciechowski, image courtesy of www.chopin.pl

On his return to Warsaw, Chopin continued his studies under Elsner. Probably composed at this time was the *Grand Fantasy on Polish Airs Op. 13*. The main theme of this piece is a favorite folk song of Chopin's mother².

At the same time Chopin actively participated in Warsaw musical life. In a letter to his friend Tytus he wrote:

I rush from place to place, and today I am at Winczengrodowa's for a soirée, whence I shall make my way to a second at Miss Kich's. You know how comfortable it is when you want to sleep and they are asking you to improvise. In effect, I have written nothing for a week, for neither man nor God. (...) *Rondo à la Krakowiak* finished "à partyje" [in part]. The introduction is original, more

Laura and Filon

Traditional Polish Folk Song

$\text{♩} = 120$

A

B

Source: Colin Hume's website, www.colinhume.com - chords can also be printed below the staff.

so than myself enclosed in a baize frock-coat. But the trio is not yet finished. (...) I am to receive at home a new, convenient place to myself. Already being prepared upstairs is a room which is to serve my comfort, with steps leading up to it from the dressing-room. There I am to have an old piano and an old bureau; it is to be my own place of refuge.

In 1819 Chopin met through his sister Ludwika, young voice student at the Warsaw Conservatoire Konstancja Gładkowska. Chopin immediately fell in love and threw himself into the new emotion with the heart and spirit of a true romantic. The second movement of his F Minor Concerto Op. 21 was inspired to a considerable extent by the composer's feelings towards the young soprano.

In October of 1829 he wrote to his friend:

Perhaps unfortunately, I have my own ideal, which I have served faithfully, though silently, for half a year; of which I dream, to thoughts of which the *adagio* of my concerto belongs.

Later he writes about the same concerto, as well as the *Waltz in D flat major*³:

(...) my ideal, whom I faithfully serve, without having spoken to her for half a year already, of whom I dream, in remembrance of who was created the *adagio* of my concerto, who inspired me to write that little waltz this morning, the one that I sent you. Be careful in one place marked *. No one knows about this apart from you. How sweet it would be for me to play it to you, dearest Tytus. In the *Trio* the left-hand song should dominate until the upper E flat in the right hand in the 5th bar, which I need not explain since you feel.

It is very possible that young Konstancja never knew about the magnitude of feelings she inspired in Chopin as he admired her silently and from afar. She certainly never openly acknowledged them.

At the age of nineteen Chopin finished his musical studies. His teacher Jozef Elsner noted on his final examination papers that Chopin had "remarkable talent" and was "a musical genius." At the same time, Chopin said of his teachers: "Under Zywny and Elsner, even a silliest ass (donkey) could learn."

In July 1829, prodded by his friends, he made a short tour to Vienna. Wilhelm (Vaclav) Würfel, Chopin's former organ teacher who had been staying there for three years, introduced Chopin to the musical society of Vienna. He also enabled Chopin to give two performances in the Kärntnertheater, a theatre where Beethoven's 9th Symphony made its debut only five years before! Accompanied by an orchestra, Chopin played *Variations*, op. 2 on a Mozart theme and the *Rondo à la Krakowiak*, op. 14. He also improvised. He enjoyed tremendous success with the public, and although the critics censured his performance for its small sound, they acclaimed him as a genius of the piano and praised his compositions. Later, the Viennese publisher Tobias Haslinger printed the *Variations* on a Theme from Mozart (1830). This was the first publication of a Chopin composition abroad, for up until then, his works had only been published in Warsaw.

Letter to parents from Vienna, August 8th, 1829.
I am well and happy. I don't know why but I appear to astonish



Konstancja Gładkowska, images on this page courtesy of www.chopin.pl



Chopin at the age of 19

the Germans and I am astonished at their finding anything to be astonished at. Thanks to Elsner later Haslinger doesn't know what to do with me. He told his son to play for me, showed me everything of musical interest that he has, and apologized for not introducing me to his wife as she was not at home. With all that, he has not yet printed my things. I did not ask him about them; but while showing me his finest editions, he informed me that my variations will probably appear in a week's time in the *Oléron*. I didn't expect that.

He wants me to play in public. They tell me here that it would



Imperial Opera house in Vienna in 1800s, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Warszawa_Teatr_Wielki_2009.jpg

be a great loss for Vienna if I were to leave without being heard. All this is incomprehensible to me. (...) Würlfel declares that if I want to show something new and to make a sensation, I must play in public, without fail: as I am now in Vienna and my things are to appear [publish] at once, I certainly must play because otherwise I should only have to come back specially. They assure me now is the most favorable time, because the Viennese are hungry for new music. A young artist should not throw away such opportunity. (...) Stein wanted at once to send one of his instruments to my lodgings and then to the concert if I give one. Graff, who, by the way, makes better instruments, made the same offer. Würlfel wants me to play first the Variations, then the Krakowiak Rondo, as a striking novelty, and finally to improvise. Will it come to that? I don't know yet. (...) P.S. I have decided. They say that I shall cause a furor, that I am a virtuoso of the first rank, that I count with Moschles, Gallenberg and Kalkbrenner. Würlfel today introduced me to Kapellmeister Seyfried and Count Gallenberg, as the young man he was persuading to give a concert (nota bene without any pay!), which greatly pleased Count Gallenberg, as it is a question of his pocket. The journalist all stare at me with round eyes, the members of the orchestra bow deeply because director of Italian opera man walks arm in arm with me. Würlfel really is making everything easy for me: he will come to the rehearsal himself and is genuinely taking trouble over my debut.

Letter to Parents from Vienna, Wednesday, August 12, 1829.

You know from my last letter that I have been persuaded to give a concert, so yesterday evening at 7PM in the Imperial Opera house I made my entry into the world. As soon as I appeared on stage the bravos began. After each variation the applause was so loud that I couldn't hear the orchestra! When I finished they clapped so much that I had to come out to bow a second time. The stage manager was very kind and amiable to me. He was so encouraging with his assurances before I went on the stage and kept my thoughts off it so well that I was not very nervous. My friends and colleagues spread themselves over the hall to listen for opinions and criticism. Some lady said 'a pity the boys has so little style'. The journalists have taken fancy to me but all the same it is being said that I played too softly or rather too delicately, for people here are used to the piano pounding. I expect to find this reproach in the paper especially as the editor's daughter pounds frightfully! It doesn't matter; I should rather prefer that people say I played too soft than that I played too loud.

Upon his return to Warsaw, Chopin, already free from student duties, devoted himself to composition and wrote, among other pieces, two *Concertos* for piano and orchestra; in *F minor* and *E minor*, mazurkas from op. 6 and 7, nocturnes from op. 9 and 15 (no. 2), etudes from op. 10 (no. 5 and 6), and songs to words by Stefan Witwicki.



Imperial Opera house in Vienna today GNU Free Documentation License http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Warszawa_Teatr_Wielki_2009.jpg

Chopin enjoyed playing at salons and private parties but was not fond of big concerts. Warsaw's audiences waited in vain to hear him to perform in large public places. In December of 1829 the *Polish Courier* wrote:

Our Countryman, ardently received abroad, has yet to be publicly heard in his Homeland. His modesty, although the most precious object of his talent, in this respect is considered less laudable. Is the talent of Mr. Chopin not the property of his Homeland? Is Poland not capable of duly appraising it? The works of Mr. Chopin indisputably bear the stamp of great genius; among his new works is to be a Concerto in F minor, worthy of taking its place alongside the works of the leading musicians of Europe. And! One hears that Mr. Chopin is leaving for Italy, but will doubtless not undertake this journey without giving a public concert in the capital of Poland... (Polish Gazette, February 12, 1830)

In February 1830 Chopin finished work on his *Concerto in F minor*. He decided to perform it for just family and closest friends. So it happened that on February 17 he played the *F minor* concerto in his home with the accompaniment of a small string orchestra. Encouraged by reactions the concerto received, he decided to premiere the piece on a large stage. But before that the first rehearsal took place, again, in Chopin's home. A few journalists were invited and later they related:

National Daily, 3rd of March: *In the Chopin family salon, a rehearsal of the F minor Concerto and the Grand Fantasy in A major. Among the listeners of both sexes were experts and amateurs and artists, there was also Kurpiński and Elsner. [...] His old piano teacher (Zywny) sat moved to tears. Elsner beamed all over with joy [...] Kurpiński in the end even directed the orchestra for the young artist himself.*

One day later, the *Warsaw Courier* wrote: *The young virtuoso played his concerto and a polonaise on various themes, particularly to music from the national song *fuć mięsieć zaszłłłłł* and from a Krakowiak by Kurpiński, etc. To relate the opinion of the most illustrious individuals: "The young Szopen surpasses all the pianists that we have heard here. He is the Paganini of the pianoforte..."*

On March 17 in the National Theatre the first public concert given by Chopin alone took place. On the program: the *Concerto in F minor* and the *Fantasia in A major* with the orchestra conducted by most famous Polish conductor of the time, Karol Kurpiński. The next day the newspapers reported: *"adagio in the concerto of Mr. Chopin is an original work of an exceptional musical genius. Undoubtedly anyone who thus begins at an early age will spread his name far and wide; his modesty is equal to the enormity of his talent."* (*Gazette of the Warsaw Correspondent*).

Maurycy Mochacki, famous Polish musician and publicist wrote in *The Polish Courier*:

After a long wait, the day before yesterday Mr. Chopin could be heard in a public concert. The large assembled audience greeted the young artist with thunderous applause. [...] No one will suspect us of nationalistic partiality or yearnings if we place Chopin in the elite group of the foremost fortepianists. [...] It is difficult to say what was paramount in it [the F minor Concerto]—compositional talent or masterly execution. As well as originality, beautiful melody, bold and magnificent passages suited to the nature of the instrument, bedecked in vivid colors of fire and of passion, and the well-judged blending of all this into a single whole—such are the salient features of this work. [...] The land which gave him life with its song acted on his musical disposition and at times penetrates this artist's works: more than one sound of his tones seems to be like a happy reflection of our native harmony. Under his hands, a simple mazur willingly gives itself up to changes and modulations, whilst retaining the proper expression and accentuation. In order to combine elegant playing and brilliant composing with such a beautiful simplicity of homespun song, as Chopin has imbued it, one must have the requisite feeling, become familiar with the echoes of our fields and forests, hear the song of the Polish peasant.

Chopin himself was less enthusiastic:

To Iwona Woyciechowska: *"So my first concert, although it was full and three days before neither box nor seat was to be had, did not create the impression on the masses that I had apprehended. The opening Allegro, accessible to only a small number, received an ovation, but it seems to be because they had to wonder what it was!" and seemingly*

pretend to be connoisseurs! The *Adagio* and *Rondo* evoked the greatest effect, here one could hear sincere cries, but the *Potpourri* on Polish themes¹⁴ utterly failed, to my mind, to achieve its aim. [...] Elsner read that my *pantaleon*¹⁵ was muted and that the left-hand passages could not be heard. That evening, whilst the gallery and those who stood in the orchestra were content, the *parrere* complained about soft playing – and I would like to be at *Kopciuszak*¹⁶ to hear the debate that must have been carried on over my person.

On 22 March the second concert in the National Theatre took place. Chopin having learned from the experience decided to change the piano: After the first concert, even *Mocznacki*, having praised me to the heavens, and especially the *Adagio*, ended by advising more energy. I realised where that energy lay and [...] played not on my own but on a Viennese instrument. *Diaboli, the Russian general*, was kind enough to give me his instrument – better than that of Hummel – and only then [...] *applause*, *praises* that each note was struck like a pearl, and that in the second I played better than in the first.

Encouraged by the enthusiastic reviews of this F minor concerto Chopin started the work on the next one, in the key of E minor.

From a letter to Tytus Woyciechowski on the work on the Concerto E minor op. 11:

The *Adagio* for the new concerto is in E major. It is not intended to be powerful, it is more romantic-like, calm, melancholic, it should give the impression of a pleasant change of a place where a thousand fond memories come to one's mind. – It is a kind of meditation on the

beautiful springtime, yet to moonlight. That is why I accompany it with *sordini*, that is violins muffled by a sort of comb, which spans the strings and imparts to them a new, silvery tone. Perhaps it is poor, but why be ashamed of writing poorly in spite of one's knowledge – only the result will reveal the error. – In this you will doubtless uncover my tendency to do it involuntarily. Just like when something involuntarily pops into my head and I like to cherish it, perhaps most erringly.

It is now the spring of 1830 and in April Chopin's Variations op. 2 are published in Vienna by Haslinger. Now came the time for Chopin to make decisions about his career. He knew that to be truly known and to have his works published he needed to embark on a tour through the musical capitals of Europe. Dresden, Berlin, Vienna, and of course, Italy. The first plans about the tour were made in the early months of 1830. Chopin however couldn't decide on the date; it was to be spring, then early summer, then early fall. Plagued by indecision and tormented by the romantic love for Konstanca he kept changing his mind and postponing dates of the planned trip.

May 15th, to Tytus Woyciechowski:
As for my journey, I no longer know what will happen. I think that instead of travelling abroad this year, I shall end up in a fever, and that will be that. I shall stay through June, through July, I shall not even want to leave, so I expect you already know, that for nothing, save for the heat, the Italian opera does not begin until September, so there is no need to hurry, all the more so since the *Rondo* for the new concerto is not finished – and for that I need assistance; I am not even rushing with it, since I have the first Allegro II and do not worry about the rest.

August, 1830, again to Woyciechowski:
Me, what am I doing? Next month, on the 10th, I depart, though I must first try out my Concerto in E minor, as the *Rondo* is already complete. [...] Hamlet today, I shall be going.

4th of September, to Woyciechowski:
Fits of madness befell me now stronger than usually – I am still sitting here – I do not have the strength to decide on the day, I think that I am leaning to forget about home for ever; I think that I am leaving to die.

18th of September, to the same: I shall leave, but where to, when somehow nothing dawns me anywhere. Yet, I do not intend to stay here in Warsaw, and should you have any suspicions of love, as do many people in Warsaw, discard them, and rest assured that I would be capable of remaining above everything where my self is concerned, and were I alone, I would still be able for a couple more years of concealing the miserable and pernicious fervour.

Finally the date of departure was set. Chopin and his friend Tytus were to leave at the beginning of November to Vienna.

On 11 October 1830, he gave a ceremonial farewell concert in the National Theatre in Warsaw, during which he played the *Concerto in E minor*, and Konstanca Gładkowska sang. He recounted the evening in the letter to Tytus:

A full house. [...] resounding ovations. (...) in the second part of the programme, after the *William Tell Overture* – *Konstanca Gładkowska*. White, with roses in her hair; her attire exquisitely suiting her face (...) she sang *cavatinas* from *La donna del lago* with recitative as she had never sung anything, except for the aria in *Agnese*, before. You know that old *quatre loggione* *per te versai*. She uttered *tutto desto* to the lower B in such a way that *Zelinski* maintained that single B to be worth a thousand *durants*. [...] After leading *Miss Gładkowska* from the stage, we got down to the *Potpourri* on *Księżyno* (*Fantasy on Polish Airs*) *so zezadli*, etc. This time I knew what I was doing, and the orchestra knew what it was doing, and the *parrere* appreciated. [...] They called out to me – not once did anyone hiss.

Even though Ms. Konstanca Gładkowska might not have known about Chopin's feelings towards her she was present in all "last" celebrations taking place in honor

of young pianists. Some sources claim that she presented him with a ring. We know for sure that on October 25th she wrote in his journal the following poem:

*Meet you fate objectionable,
To what is needed why you must.
Remember, unforgettable,
That here in Poland are you loved...
That the laurels of laurels might never come to with,
Leave you now Your closest friends and dearest family:
Strangers may esteem You more, regard you to the hilt,
But they surely cannot love You stronger than do we.*

Underneath in Chopin's hand writing added a bitter: "they can, they can."

Finally on November 2nd Chopin left Warsaw, heading for Vienna. He was made farewell by friends, professors and loved ones in the tavern in the Wola district of the city – with a cantata composed by Elsner for male voices and guitar. That same day, before his departure, he placed the date on the manuscript of his first two *Etudes* from the future opus 10: in C major and A minor. As a farewell gift, his friends gave him a silver goblet, filled with Polish soil. He kept it with him for the rest of his life. Chopin traveled to the city of Kalisz, where he met his fellow traveler and dear friend, Tytus. Armed with letters of recommendation two friends embarked on the longest journey of their lives, in every sense of the word. Chopin did not know it then but he was never to return to his beloved Poland. ❧

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www.chopin.pl; translated by Malgosia Lis

Endnotes:

- The story of Szyman was made famous by Roman Polanski in an award winning 2002 movie "The Pianist".
- Polish alphabet has more letters than English. Letter E, with a diacrit is pronounced "e". Another example is a letter "Z".
- In 1901 Pogodke entered the International Frederic Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw and was eliminated in the third round. One of the applicants, Maria Szyman, proclaimed him a genius and resigned from the jury in protest.
- General and military leader during the 1794 Kościuszko uprising against Imperial Russia and the Kingdom of Prussia. After commanding the uprising he had fought in the American Revolutionary War as a soldier in the Continental Army. In 1795, in recognition of his military service, he had been bestowed by the Continental Congress to the rank of brigadier general and had become a naturalized citizen of the United States.
- Amadeus was a patron/benefactor in many countries in Europe and Latin America of celebrating on a particular day of the year associated with the same's given name. The custom originated with the Catholic and Orthodox calendar of saints.
- St. Nicholas, that is, the one who brings gifts.
- This might be a pun on the names of Bach and Bachiis, the Roman god of strong drink.
- The *Finezza* has an opera in three acts by Carl Maria von Weber. It is considered the first important German Romantic opera.
- Maria Szymanowska was a Polish composer and one of the best professional virtuoso pianists of the 19th century. She toured extensively throughout Europe, especially in the 1820s. She composed for the court, gave concerts, taught music, and ran an influential salon.
- Jan Kolanow Jędrzejewicz later married Chopin's older sister Ludwika.
- A pageantry or formal public speech, praise of a person, eulogy.
- Epistole in poetica made it powdered mustard used applied to an irritant part of the body. The treatments Emma received most likely weakened her and sped up her death.
- A Polish folk song "the music, secreted, how we sleep", also known as "Lullaby and Folia". To listen to this song please visit: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RDkAVyP3KtXrE> related.
- Later classified by Fontana as Op. 76, No. 3.
- Katania was Polish key.
- German term used in those days to describe a small square piano.
- Albertyn bar in Warsaw where young artists gathered.

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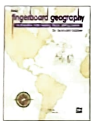


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Tips for Parents for Successful Practising with Children

By Yoko Shibata and Jenny Macmillan

Practising a musical instrument with one's own children is a huge skill. Even with plenty of support from Suzuki teachers, practising will often be a challenge for parents. This article is based on the results of a questionnaire devised and analysed by Yoko Shibata with responses from Suzuki families learning piano, cello and double bass with Jenny Macmillan and her daughter Pippa. Responses show that, on average, parents are satisfied with practices two times out of three. However, even the parents of more advanced children, and a parent/child pair who seem to work efficiently together, have days when child and/or parent end practise nearly in tears. So what affects the success or otherwise of a practice? What can we improve? We hope that the ideas and suggestions generated will help other parents when practising with their children.

Unsuccessful practice

Let us first define common factors which can lead to unsuccessful practices:

- Child is tired.
- Child cries or argues.
- Parent is impatient or frustrated (often when parent is tired, too).
- Time is limited—parent is rushed.
- Parent is trying to do too much.
- Child needs to learn repertoire pieces which have been forgotten.
- Parent and child are in conflict over a matter separate from practice.

Often we can predict when the practice is going to be bad before we start. The child is tired after school, it is getting late and s/he is hungry. The parent is tired from a long day at work or caring for young children and has a long list of things to cover before the next lesson, which is only a few days away. There are only a couple of hours

before bedtime in which to practise, eat, do homework, bathe and go through the bedtime routine. The parent may need to insist that the child come away from a favourite television programme, which puts the child in a bad mood.

In addition to those common factors, there are other contributors to unsuccessful practices:

- Parent has a fixed idea of what to achieve: s/he is not flexible enough with the child and the situation.
- Parent made poor notes in lesson.
- Practice is poorly planned and not structured.
- Practice takes place outside normal routine time slot.
- Other children in the house disturb the practice.
- Parent cannot persuade child to practise at all!

Successful practice

Now let us see what contributes to a successful practice. Here are the common replies:

- Child is not tired.
- Parent is calm.
- No interruptions from other children, pets, phone calls, etc.
- Parent allowed more time than necessary to cover the materials.
- Parent is not interrupting child while s/he is playing.
- No conflict or argument between parent and child outside of practice.
- The lesson focused on small, clear points to practise.
- Parent turns tasks into enjoyable games and challenges for the young child.
- Practice has clear target, e.g., a new piece to learn, concert to aim for.
- Child enjoys the practice—has an



Father and son practising

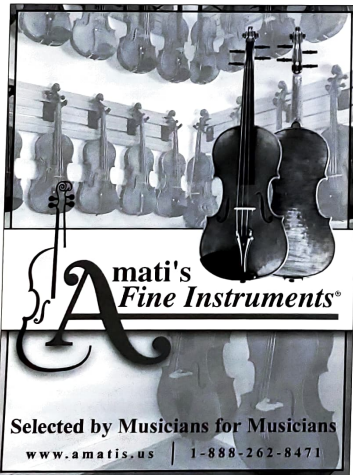
audience of soft toys, feels s/he is playing games rather than doing tasks, is offered edible rewards or stickers for achievement. Practise ends on a high note with a favourite piece or playing a duet.

- Child is satisfied with achievement, having coloured or ticked several boxes on chart.
- Parent remembers to praise, praise, praise the child!

Here are some children's views of what is a successful practice:

- I'm not shouted at.
- I've had some food first—I feel irritable when I am hungry.
- I'm so bored that practising is the best option.
- I get a reward like a chocolate bar at the end of the practice.
- I have some control or choices.
- There is a structure.
- There is some agreement with my mum what to practise.

For a successful practice, both parent and child need to be well rested and fed; they are not arguing with each other; the parent is prepared for the practice (equipped with well-written notes from lessons, having figured out in advance how to turn tasks into manageable chunks or into games or challenges, and with charts or rewards to hand); and parent is staying calm and remembering to praise the child.



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It is important for parents to be in the right frame of mind, anticipating their child's needs, identifying what may potentially go wrong, and trying to eliminate those factors. This includes, for example, not practising during their child's favourite television programme. On the other hand, this can be used positively—try to finish the practice before the favoured television programme (or other activity) so the reward is to watch the favourite programme. It is also helpful to practise in the morning when children are fresh, rather than after school when they and parents are often tired.

Parents can use their imagination to find new ways of practising so it is not the same every day. Variety prevents boredom from setting in. All children are different, as has been noted by parents who have more than one child. What suits one child may not suit a sibling. Ideally, parents provide both flexibility and focus in the practice. It is up to the parents to make practices successful and enjoyable. The good news is that each parent is not alone with this challenge—and even Suzuki teachers have the same problems with their own children.

Here is a description of how Jenny used to practise with her three children when they were young. This shows the importance of regularity, of allowing more time than necessary, and having some fun time so that children will want to practise the next day too:

The critical point is that we always did two piano practices a day (except on those few occasions when we went out for the day, when I felt we were too tired and it would be counter-productive to try to practise in the evening). While the children were at primary school (age five to 11) I allowed 40 minutes for each child for a 30-minute piano practice before school (starting at 6:30 a.m., 7:10 a.m. and 7:50 a.m.). In the evening they would each do a good 10 minute practice (which was more relaxed, and often extended to 15 minutes)—just scales, once through newest piece, plus duets or jazzy piece. I was delighted if two out of three of our 30-minute practices were "good."

Strategies to make practice more successful

Strategies vary according to the age of the child. However, some strategies work for all ages of children:

- Charts to tick, to add stickers to, or to colour
- Immediate rewards—ticks in boxes, stickers, paper chain or chocolate buttons, awarded according to length of practice or for each completed task
- Collective rewards—stickers and ticks turn into bigger rewards—small toys, family outing, pocket money
- Light a candle for the duration of the practice—a reward when the candle has burnt down.
- Child knows what is to be covered during the practice session.
- Targets/incentives—concert, wanting to surprise or impress the teacher
- Praise, praise, praise—everyone responds more positively to a suggestion for improvement after receiving praise.
- Encourage child: "Do you remember two weeks ago you couldn't play this bit at all? Now it sounds lovely!"
- Make child laugh—from a silly intentional mistake by parent, a joke, stuffed animal, spontaneous cuddle, followed by tickles.

- At beginning of practice, tell child some good news—grandparents coming to visit, an exciting project, plans for birthday celebration or family outing, etc.
- Play duets with child.

With younger children, practices need to be presented as fun activities which children want to come back to. Focus during a practice is more important than the length of a practice.

- Tasks are presented as games or challenges.
- Use of props such as cuddly toys, puzzles, dice, even a timer
- Add a piece to a jigsaw, colour part of a picture or do a dot-to-dot for every ten repetitions of a small assignment.
- Count down towards zero for repetitions: this heightens concentration.
- Child plays to audience (favourite toys, siblings, visiting friends or relatives).
- Parent plays piece badly and child teaches parent.
- Invent and sing silly words to the piece.
- Child is involved in story line or role play—child plays music while parent tells the story, or child pretends to be his/her favourite character playing a piece.

With older children, it is not so much a question of whether the child practises so much as when, how and what to practise.

- Offer some choices in practice, not necessarily what is covered, but the order in which things are covered, or how they are practised, or lucky dip box for review
- Record lessons. Then review and assess them.
- Play games such as swapping hands, improvising.

Helpful ideas from Suzuki Families

Here is a list of ideas and suggestions from Suzuki families. Perhaps you could try one when you need variety for the next practice session.

Charts

Your teacher may have a selection of charts for parents and children to use.

- Practice chart to indicate what is to be covered and what has been covered
- Practice chart to indicate child has done the practice (for collective rewards)
- Review chart for past repertoire
- Attitude chart—a sticker or tick for a cheerful practice

• Triangle chart for each practice point (see illustration). On first day, practise assignment until successful once, then colour circle at top of triangle. On second day, practise assignment until successful twice, and then colour the two circles on second row of triangle. Continue daily for seven days. The assignment should be very short and very specific, e.g. play Twinkle Variation One with finger four stroking well, or play the two notes of a slur strong-soft.

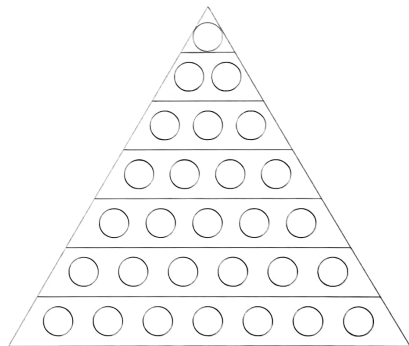
See www.jenny-macmillan.co.uk for a selection of practice charts.

Recordings

In addition to daily listening to Suzuki repertoire:

Practice Triangle

Name: _____
Assignment: _____
Date: _____



Triangle chart



Pippa teaching Lisa with Yoko taking notes

- Play along with recordings of the Suzuki repertoire, sometimes one hand alone, sometimes hands together.
- Listen to a piece played by different performers.
- Listen to the original music from which the piece was adapted to the instrument.
- Listen to the piece played on other instruments.
- Parent shows child how much s/he enjoys listening to the piece, or playing or singing it, especially if child is reluctant to practise it.

Fun playing/practising

These ideas are good for well-known repertoire pieces:

- Play blindfolded or with eyes closed or in a darkened room.
- Play with crossed hands.
- Play in the style of an animal or a favourite character.
- Parent and child play together in different ways: each play one hand of a piece; child plays hands together and parent ‘accompanies’ with one hand; play duet arrangement, parent accompanies on another instrument.
- ‘Funny dip’ – cards describing how to play a piece, such as slow as a snail, fast as a cheetah, loud as an elephant

- stomping, quiet as a little mouse
- Play a piece in different keys.
- Play a tune written in a major key in a minor key.

Tools and ideas

Further suggestions to aid practice:

- Multi-sensory learning—dancing with the music in order to feel the beat, visualising music with an appropriate picture or photo
- Colour note heads on score to show different dynamics.
- Treasure hunt—Find a raisin or chocolate button for each task completed.
- Abacus for number of repetitions
- Play with different rhythms: dotted, triplets, in the rhythm of a Twinkle variation.
- Play with different articulations—play a legato phrase staccato or double staccato.
- Competition to complete three (or other number) consecutive repetitions of a study point. Child always starts first, so s/he has a chance to win without cheating; if s/he makes a mistake, parent needs to make a smudge, so both start counting from one again.
- Parent challenges child to make bigger or softer sound (child nearly always wins).

- Follow child’s interests: e.g., Football Suzuki – if the task is to play a phrase with perfect legato, child has to play it legato for his team to score a goal, but parent’s team scores if there is a gap in the legato. It helps if the parent can do this in a very lively manner, imitating a sports commentator!

Other useful comments

- Notes from lessons: Write down clearly how many repetitions child promised teacher to do.
- Keep up with review. If child needs to re-learn an old repertoire piece, the practice tends to be unsuccessful and/or unhappy.
- If practice time is limited for any reason, focus only on the points made in the lesson.
- Children get frustrated when asked to stop in the middle of a piece. Agree in advance either to repeat short assignments or to play through the piece, or one followed by the other.
- If dealing with many pieces hands separately, don’t try to do entire pieces—better to do, for example, left hand only for one particular line or even only one or two bars of Alberti bass (but really well!); or right hand only of one or two phrases, but with very good singing sound and beautifully shaped dynamics.
- Video child playing a concert piece and watch it together; both make comments. Praise one good point, then suggest one point for improvement. It is especially important for child to say what s/he wants to improve; the point for improvement is written on a flash card and applied next time the piece is played.
- Parents take lessons from the teacher on the Suzuki repertoire and/or know each piece of music in advance of child’s learning it (child’s study points, difficult fingering, new techniques, etc.).
- Cover the most important piece first; if you don’t get to the end of the list, try not to feel bad about it. There is always tomorrow; remember next day to start with the piece that didn’t get done.
- No need always to start with a scale

or sight-reading (though do warm up with either Twinkle variations or variations on a scale); if a practice starts badly, it tends to drag.

- Finish practice with something special—a favorite piece, a concert piece, something jazzy, or a duet.
- Distinguish between *play* and *practice*. Children play for pleasure, for emotional satisfaction; they practise in order to progress, both musically and technically; both are important aspects of children’s development.
- Read about the composer; Use *Improve Your Practice* books by Paul Harris; children feel closer to the composer and the repertoire when they know something interesting about the composer.
- Attend a Suzuki workshop.
- Learn from other parents through observing other children’s lessons and discussing the issues together.
- Email your teacher with problems.

What to do when your child is trying, but plays a piece poorly, or not as well as previously

Your child is probably aware that the piece didn’t go well and is probably disappointed. So empathise and agree with your child, ‘Isn’t it annoying that it wasn’t so good today?’ Ask your child what s/he thinks it needs (hands separate or slow work or attention to one particular bar, etc.), and agree either to do that immediately, or to add it to the list for the next practice.

But also try to find something to **praise** about the playing. Start with the basics, posture, hand position, finger movements. Even if children are quite advanced, there is no harm in reminding them what progress has been made over the years; they probably remember these things were problematic in the early stages. And the fact that these basics are good even when challenged to play a newer piece shows that these have now become automatic and are done subconsciously, which is just what we are aiming for. Or praise beautiful tone on one particular note, or good rhythm in an awkward bar, good balance between the hands, good speed (at opening, or at end, even if not all the way through!), good contrasts of dynamics, well-shaped phrases, well expressed character/ mood of piece. If nothing was good (unlikely, if child was trying), then praise him/her for trying hard, or for persevering and keeping going through to the end.

If the child is not trying, that is a different matter, of course, and care and encouragement are required to help them put in the effort. Perhaps that calls for re-thinking about the time of day for practising. Perhaps your child needs to be put to bed earlier in order to feel fresh in the morning for a relaxed practice. Perhaps the parent is tired and not able to guide the practice in a relaxed frame of mind. More incentives may be required: child play two own choice pieces for visiting grandparents; parent promise to video each repertoire piece after the teacher has heard it in lesson; a small reward for learning the left hand of the next piece perfectly; etc.

Conclusion

Practising with young children is a challenge for parents. The more parents are able to think about practices, preparing



Jenny teaching a piano lesson

for them, planning the outline within which there will be flexibility according to the mood and needs of the child, the more successful practices will be. Every child is different, so the parent will have to work differently with each one. At the same time, children do like to feel firmly guided. They can tell when their parents don’t really know what they are doing, such as when parents are vaguely ruminating, ‘Shall we do this or shall we do that?’ as opposed to clearly giving the child a choice: ‘Would you like to do this first or that first?’ The child knows the other will be done afterwards, or the next day.

Huge pleasure can be derived from supervising productive music practices. Regular good-natured work should offer a wonderful opportunity for bonding between parent and child, not to mention the musical progress that is possible when parent and child are working well together. ☺



Yoko Shibata is a scientific researcher. She devised the questionnaire and analysed the results on which this article is based. She has one daughter, Lisa, age 8, who learns Suzuki piano with Jenny Macmillan and Suzuki double bass with Pippa Macmillan.

Jenny Macmillan is an ESA piano teacher trainer. She teaches in Cambridge, England. Her own three children all learned piano by the Suzuki approach. Her daughter, Pippa, who is studying at the Royal Academy of Music in London, was also a Suzuki cellist and now teaches Suzuki cello and double bass. Jenny has written extensively about the Suzuki approach. Her articles feature on her web site: www.jenny-macmillan.co.uk.



Why is it So Hard to Play an Instrument?

By Mary Anne Fairlie

Is playing an instrument “hard”? Any Twinkle parent would tell you that the Twinkle Variations are very difficult to master. Parents wonder if their child will ever get through them. And then the day comes when each student says, “Do we have to play Twinkle? It’s too easy!” The realization that this metamorphosis can happen with every Suzuki piece is mind-boggling. If every piece can be so easy, then why is it considered so hard to play? It sure looks easy to see them playing on stage! And notice the contradiction that they don’t like it too hard or too easy. It is not wonder it’s hard to please them!

It is my job as a teacher to break the learning into small enough steps that the student will always find success. When I hear something is too hard my stock answer is this: “Practicing makes it easy.” I will tell them that there is a magic number that even I don’t know, as to how many times a practice spot has to be played for it to become easy. I will tell them my guess, and then have them count their repetitions at home to see if I was close. Though I will often try to guide them away from the attitude that something is “hard,” to be honest with myself, I too will look at a new piece of orchestra music to see how “hard” it is—which translates into how much time or work I need to allow myself to learn the part. A mind-set of being “hard” can color their attitude toward their practice or their instruments, and a mind-set of “too hard” can stop them in their tracks. It is worth delving into the various reasons students consider it “hard” to play, and separating these from the music and the instrument itself; otherwise we incorrectly suspect that they don’t like their instrument.

Practicing often does not give immediate gratification. It can sometimes take days of good repetitious practice to finally master a new practice spot. Consider how many weeks or months of good practice unfold before one feels the satisfaction of being comfortable using vibrato. If repetition turns a new fingering or technique into something “easy,” then once upon a time it must have felt “hard.” Students can get lost in the lag time between the desire to master a concept and the mastery itself. It is as if trying to capture time progression by watching the minute hand or sometimes the hour hand. There is often not a definite

moment in time that reflects the finish line. Students can get stuck on the thought that it is hard, if not reminded of the continual progress and the fact that it is getting easier. It doesn’t help when the ambiguous finish line is often pushed out further as the new technique is refined. How many times do we hear students say with a sigh, “I really thought I had this piece finished this week.” This is where we start the dialogue about the pros and cons of giving rewards for doing the 20 repetitions and the necessity of providing those virtual finish lines for students who need an objective way to measure progress. Though we prefer to measure quality instead of quantity, moving to a new piece or book can be the biggest objective measure of progress and cause for celebration. It also points to the difficulty that younger students have in the longer pieces that can take months without the satisfaction of finishing and being able to move on.

New skills are hard before they are easy. Continually working on new pieces which are inherently “hard” can take its toll. One begins to have this feeling that it is always hard and always will be. Spending time each day on what has become easy can change one’s mind about how hard it is to play a musical instrument. Spending enough time on review pieces can dispel the myth that it is always hard. Having a book recital as a virtual finish line can provide gratification and a reason to celebrate as well as give one a reason to spend time on review. Review is the necessary component to reinforce the good habits and skills, making them even easier. A Bach Minuet can be tough to get through, but playing it again when you have learned all of the pieces in Book One is a breeze. Going back to the old pieces and realizing how easy they are is a big confidence boost.

Students are asked to push aside their predominant mode of learning and access dormant learning styles. Consider the student with the remarkable ear who can play anything he hears, but is barely aware of which finger is playing the note. When he starts to read printed music, I can practically see the brain searching for the sound cue instead of the visual cue. If the brain connects to the sound of the new passage before the visual cue is fully inputted, he can ignore the new signals, and his learning is slowed. The pull away from a predominant learning style

can be agonizing. It takes extraordinary discipline and patience to accomplish this process. This can feel “hard!” It is the same with the visual learner asked to “hear” pitch; the aural learner asked to be aware of the body (what angle the pinky hits the string); the kinesthetic learner asked to work on detail and visa versa; the left brain learner that feels satisfaction with mastery of difficult passages and playing them as fast as technically possible being asked to slow down to find the musical phrasing; the right brain learner who hears a musical phrase in everything but doesn’t want to stop to correct technique; the distractible student asked to focus; the perfectionist asked to accept mistakes; the hyperactive student asked to stand still; and all students who are asked to accept patient repetition, which is the least exciting but most important part of developing any new skill. Playing an instrument demands skills in each of these areas. Students are asked to shift their learning styles continually and are usually asked to focus on the styles that are the most difficult for them because those are the areas that need the most work. The brain resists the new orientation and the result can be emotional. The willingness to accept some tears as part of a normal reaction to resistance, and the ability to push past the resistance to address the challenge is the hard part of playing an instrument. No doubt about it. It’s hard work. Meeting this challenge strengthens discipline, resolve, character, and maturity.

There are other aspects of Suzuki instrument study that really have nothing to do with music itself, but are often the cause of the most emotion and can be mistakenly thought of as reasons for students not liking the instrument. Practice as part of a daily routine, where schedules are shuffled, promises are made and broken, arguments ensue, and yes, more tears are spilled—until the routine is as accepted as bed time—is often a big issue. If I hear there have been tears, this is the obvious question: “Is your child practicing when she is tired or hungry?” The less obvious question is “Could you be focusing on more than one point at a time or pushing the length of the practice?” Many times the root of the difficulty lies in

the parent’s feeling inadequate as a home teacher. This is one of the easiest issues to resolve: a parent can ask to have her own lesson. Then there are the psychological distress and the power struggles that often go with parent/child relationships. There is a feeling of being interrupted and corrected over and over. Wouldn’t we all rather play at anything without someone standing over our shoulder telling us, “You can do this better.” It is a lot to ask of parents to motivate their youngsters, initiate and lead practice and make it fun. Whoa! Make it fun? This is hard work. Do hard work and fun go together? It can be fun. It sure makes it easier when it’s fun, and when it is, it is lagniappe (a bonus gift).

When teachers and parents are faced with the black cloud attitude of instrument study being hard, it is our mission to analyze the difficulties to understand which issues need attention. Understanding can point one in the direction to finding strategies and answers. Sunlight can dispel the black cloud. Many of our difficulties are resolved and we make the transformation to “easy.” Acceptance of challenge is a necessary part of learning, and working hard to bring about the greatest results is also essential.

So, with all of these difficulties and its being so hard, why do we do it? Why do we put ourselves through this? It is more than the knowledge that it is good

for them, that they are developing their brains in ways unimaginable, that they are developing self-confidence and are learning to be appreciative of beauty in its purest form. If you are ever lucky enough to see your child dance with his instrument, you will know why. When you see her sway with the music, you will know why. When you see the pride with which he gets out his instrument to show his friends or he asks to play for show and tell, you’ll know why. When she is angry with the world and you hear it spill from the instrument, you’ll know why. When you hear your child play a piece and it’s not the notes you hear but your child’s spirit, you will have no question as to why you accept such hard work. ☺



Mary Anne Fairlie currently teaches the “Music Through Strings” Suzuki program at Lowell-Whitman Elementary School, Steamboat Springs, CO, where all 50 K-8 students play a stringed instrument. She has been a Suzuki instructor for 25 years, teaching in Odessa, TX, New Orleans, LA and now CO. She has been a Suzuki parent to her two sons, now teenagers.

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By Cecilia Calvelo-Hopkins

Have you ever moved to another city, state, province, or country? If you have, you know how hard it is to start a Suzuki music studio all over again. It takes a long time for a Suzuki teacher to get settled in, establish a reputation, have enough students to offer group lessons, get to know the new Suzuki community, find out about the performance scene (gigs), meet a pianist who can be your studio's accompanist, find the perfect place for your group lessons, and so on.

In the last twelve years, due mostly to my husband's job, we moved from Houston, TX, to San Francisco, CA, then overseas to Madrid, Spain, then within Madrid we moved from downtown to a commuter city nearby, and finally last July we moved from Spain to Austin, TX. I am originally from Argentina, so everywhere we moved I was a foreigner. This made it particularly hard for me because I was an outsider in all these places. In Spain for example, this was especially challenging because I was a teacher outside of the ESA Association, and I was both a foreigner to the expatriate American community and to the local Spanish community. Hopefully this will not be your case, but if it is, do not despair.

It is possible to gain respect and trust from parents and colleagues, and to eventually build up a new practice. Over the years I have tried many different approaches during this process and different tactics have worked better in different places. If you have not moved and do not plan to do so either, my experiences could still be of value to you if you are beginning your teaching career or if you want to expand your existing studio.

So, here are some tips based on my experiences:

1. Network with your fellow Suzuki teachers. Through the SAA directory, you can look up who is teaching in town. Call or email them and send them your current resume. Tell them you just moved, and if they have a full studio and are not taking any new students, you would appreciate if they can refer to you any calls from parents who are looking for a teacher in the area.
2. Register your name with the SAA "Suzuki Teacher Location Service" and in the music stores near your area. Most of the time those music stores have a referral list they hand out to customers who ask about teachers (which should be free).



Above top to bottom: Students in group class; Students pose with Cecilia. Facing page: Cecilia with student

3. Call the Teacher Trainers in your area and find out if there are any courses or workshops being held. This is especially of help if you belong to the Suzuki Association of the area to which you move. Remember that if you move to a country that is not a part of the SAA, you may be required to be a part of the Suzuki Regional Association (ESA, TERI, ASA, or PPSA) to take any training. However, if you move within the SAA, being in touch with the local Teacher Trainers can be very meaningful; and, in my experience, American Teacher Trainers are welcoming of new teachers and will be glad to work with you.
4. Get the names of the middle school and high school orchestra teachers in your area and send them an email with your resume. Tell them you are willing to come in the mornings to teach private lessons during orchestra time. This works well in Texas public schools; check with the school district in your area to explore this possibility.
5. Find out the requirements to become a Substitute Teacher for the

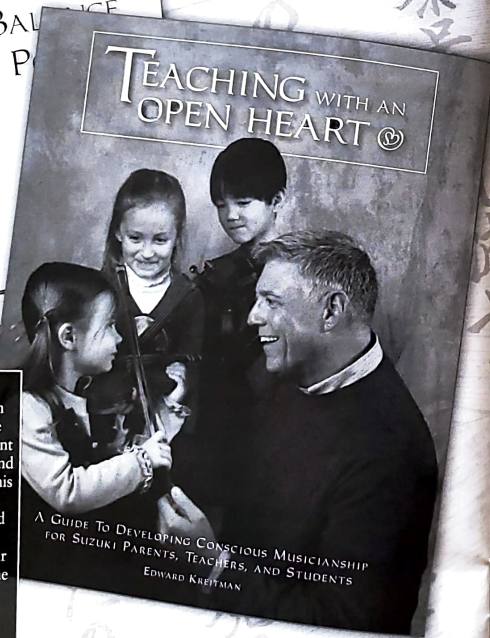
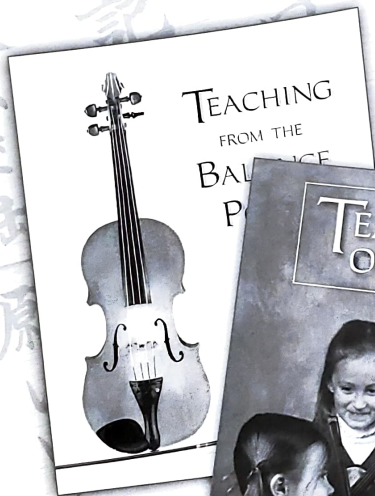
local school district and sign up, so that if any orchestra middle school or high-school conductor takes a day off, they can call you in as a sub. Working in middle school and high school orchestras (most of the time outside of the Suzuki method) makes you appreciate so much the way we do things in the Suzuki world! This idea works well in the U.S.

6. If you speak another language, research the private bilingual schools in your area. If your language skills match their curriculum, they may be willing to hire you to teach in their after school program, or you may even be fortunate enough that they may want you to start a curricular Suzuki Project! Remember we teach music in the same way a child acquires language, so our approach to education should go along with the school's objectives of educating children in a "foreign language."
7. Give free concerts at Day Care and Elementary Schools in your area to introduce the students to the instrument you play. Most of the time, teachers are glad to receive a guest artist and to have the youngsters do something out of the ordinary (this worked very well in Spain). This may spark an interest in some families. Make sure the schools you visit are close enough to your home studio that people will not rule you out due to distance.
8. Practice being a better teacher and doing those things you normally would not have time to do. Organize all programs from your old concerts, edit old videos so that you have taped material to take a Practicum course, or get your old edition books and sit down with the new ones. Carefully transfer all the information you have on the book you took a Unit with and write it on your new book. It looks better to open those new editions and see something written in them. Also, write down any questions you may have about those new editions (bowings, fingerings, suggested exercises, etc); then go online and, if you haven't, watch Mr. Lieb speak about the process of reediting the books.
9. Teach Toddler Music and Movement classes. I did this in Madrid for several years and it was a huge success for parents and students, as well as for myself. You will be surprised and enchanted by the freedom and immense creativity that those classes bring to you. I had taught general music, was Orff trained, my first son was a 14 month old at the time (I had tried all this with him first), and had a long repertoire of children's songs in my music library. All I had to do was develop a program that would address the essential elements of music that young children and parents should

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Music and Movement

be familiar with before they take formal Suzuki instrumental lessons. Since I had not taken the ECE courses that the SAA offers now, I had to create my own curriculum of work. My main objectives were to develop the inner ear rhythmically and melodically, to develop good listening habits (presence/absence of sound, listening for repeating patterns and changes in timbers, high and low pitches, short and long sounds, etc), and to improve physical coordination. By playing with simple rhymes, singing, doing lots of rhythmic echoes and body percussion, working with claves, dancing to simple duple meter pieces, etc, the children and their parents develop a clear sense of beat, a sense of counting and knowing when to come in, identification of simple ostinato patterns, improvement of their ear/eye/hands coordination, etc. Not only did this allow me to grow tremendously as a musician (I had to start playing piano again to accompany my singing, make my own CDs the parents took home to listen to like we do in the Suzuki method, became a sort of ethnomusicologist searching for world music that addressed the different musical objectives I was working on, etc), but also through these classes I trained some good musical habits in families who in only one and a half or two years

were ready to take Suzuki Violin Lessons. Those parents, who came from my Toddler Classes, were the best educated Suzuki Parents I ever had.

10. If you do not wish to teach Music and Movement classes, call the ECE trained teachers in your area and find out if they have a board to display a flier with your information. Those parents and their children are great potential Suzuki families.

11. Regarding group lessons (this is a tough one because it does take a while until you have a nice group going), do not despair about having an eclectic mix of three young Pre-Twinkle students, one in mid Book One, one in Book Two, and an older transfer student who needs lots of fixing in Book Three or Four. You will be surprised at how much can be done with these kids and how many ideas you come up with in order to teach a group lesson with them! Call other Suzuki teachers in the area who may be willing to share group lessons with you. This is a wonderful experience. You both bring together your students in a church or whatever space you use for the group lessons and take turns accompanying and leading; you have the opportunity to sit down with the other person to plan lessons, both sharing your strengths. Not only do your few kids get to be a part of a bigger group,

but you grow a lot as a teacher and a person after working in a team with another Suzuki teacher.

12. Do not discard sending your resume to the existing Suzuki Schools or Academies in your town. You may get a job working for someone else, which is in some ways easier than starting your own studio. Also, remember that in some countries having a "home studio" is not too common. For example, in Spain and other parts of Europe (where the "conservatory" originates), children are more familiar with going to a "school" or "institution" for music instruction rather than a teacher's home. After my first six years in Spain I decided to send my resume to the local Suzuki schools. They called me, and I ended up teaching for one of the oldest and best established Suzuki schools in Madrid. "Cuatro Cuerdas." This turned out to be a very enriching experience for me since I finally could see the way Spanish Suzuki teachers teach and the way they are trained, and I could then understand how we are similar and how we are different even though we all teach using the same Suzuki method.



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13. Keep in touch with your old students. Ask how the new "student-teacher" situation is working. Those families that you left probably were of much support to you when you were there. Keep up with those relationships of the past (both with the families you taught and the colleagues you became friends with). You never know, one day you can invite them to a Summer Institute, plan to take your "new students" to your town for a tour, or build whatever Suzuki bridges you can imagine! It makes me feel so good when I hear that my old students miss me and that they are continuing with their Suzuki work, building upon what we created together. That is the best pay a teacher can receive!

14. Set aside time for *practice*. Now that you are not teaching every afternoon, you should have a bit of extra time to devote to your own playing. This will help you find a calm center within yourself, and it can be very inspiring and relaxing to work on something you have not played for a long time or always wished to play but never did.

15. Keep your expectations realistic. It is very hard to get the Book Five or Six students you would probably love to get. New studios are usually formed upon the three, four, five and six-year olds. Do not feel stuck or down about it. Be positive and think of what an expert you are at setting beginners. One cannot have it all in life; the experiences of living in so many places and a studio with your back row full of thirteen or fourteen-year olds playing Book Seven are not very compatible.

16. Write an article for the SAJ! Definitely this is something there is never time for when you are busy teaching. Now is the time to do some self-evaluation and find out what are your strong and weak traits. You may have something of value to share with the Suzuki community. I am finding out this is very helpful.


So, there it is. Those are some of the most important setting strategies I've used to get started. Know that during the process you will feel lonely, frustrated and lost. It is normal. Moving is a "state of mind" that takes a long time to overcome. I hope my words facilitate things for someone; it is my contribution to the Suzuki community and my contribution to Dr. Suzuki's dream for a better world, where we can help one another to grow and where we can be in harmony with all the beauty that surrounds us. So now, take the Suzuki Spirit with you everywhere you go! ☺



Cecilia Calvelo-Hopkins is an Argentinean violinist and student of Symist Bauruz, who came to the US in January 1993 to study violin with Cathy Robinson and Felicia Moe at the New World School of the Arts (Miami, FL). In 1996 she completed a B.A. in Music Education from the University of Houston, and in 2000 an M.A. in Renaissance Music from San Francisco State University.

Besides teaching Suzuki Violin and Music and Movement Classes, she loves languages, speaks Spanish, English, and Italian fluently, has worked in the latest Spanish translation of *Nurtured by Love* printed by Summy-Birchard in 2004, and has helped translating various materials for the Latin American Suzuki Associations.

While living in Madrid, Cecilia became very interested in tango music, becoming a member of the Sexteto Porteño and playing under the direction of Bandoneonista Fabian Carbone. Since then, Cecilia has become serious about the tango and continues to perform and dedicate herself to the study of the music of her native country. Currently, Cecilia lives in Austin and has a small Violin Suzuki studio which she plans to grow! Last, but not least, Cecilia is the proud Suzuki parent of her two children, Henry and Clara, who play Suzuki cello and violin respectively.



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Thoughts on the Institute Experience

By Jan McClure

As I write, I am sitting near the duck pond on the beautiful Emory and Henry College Campus, near Abingdon, Virginia. Another Summer Suzuki Institute has come to a close, leaving me with wonderful memories—gifts too precious to be forgotten.

As I think back over the years, I realize how meaningful the institute experience is to both my family and me. For some twenty years, I have attended an institute: as a Suzuki mom with children in tow, as a teacher trainee, and in recent years, as a member of the faculty. Each experience is among the richest of my life.

My son Tim, now a violin performance major at the Brigham Young University School of Music, began attending Institute at the age of seven. He, like every child I've ever known to attend an institute, always felt wonderfully nurtured and esteemed. An institute is a "safe" place, where a child is free to learn, to grow, to be creative, and to simply be him/herself. Parents, too, thrive in this atmosphere. At first experience, they may feel a little apprehensive, even skeptical, but within hours (minutes?) are drawn into this wonderfully nurturing environment we call "Institute." There is a noticeable lack of worldly influence—people from all walks of life come together to study and to make music with their children. And the children thrive! Oh, if only every child could have this opportunity every year!

My colleagues who teach and serve on the faculty of the Virginia Suzuki Institute (like the faculty of any Suzuki Institute!) are fine and caring musicians. They come from all over the country, each highly respected in their field, and each there for the sole purpose of making a difference in a child's life. I feel proud, honored, and mostly humbled to be with them, a small part of this peaceful, yet powerful, Suzuki movement.

My mind wanders over the events of the past week, the little things that make the Institute experience what it is:

- Numerous untold acts of kindness, such as a young man, violin strapped to his back, holding the elevator door open for a mom juggling a small cello in one hand and a toddler in the other.
- Teenagers, whose playing skills range from rudimentary beginning to sophisticated artistry, together enjoying a

rousing game of ultimate frisbee. (Their artist teachers joined them as well!) Later these same students gleefully (and uncharacteristically!) participated in a watermelon fight (no rinds, of course!).

- Older children helping younger children put their dishes on the cafeteria conveyor belt.
- Listening to a former student perform Kreisler's *Preludium and Allegro* with the heart of an artist. (I grew a little tear at that!)
- Stealing a few quiet moments just to walk around campus—good for body and soul.
- Teens accepting, supporting, and encouraging one another, regardless of their playing level.
- Performing a Mozart Duo with my son during the faculty recital. It was an opportunity to reassure parents that indeed, it is all worth it!
- Thursday hugs from my Pre-Twinklers, who on Monday would not even look at me.
- Feeling reassured that the world is not such a bad place: there are good, caring, nurturing parents, and loving, respectful, happy children and teachers dedicated to Dr. Suzuki's dream of creating a better world for our children ... and their children ...

I must put pen away, pack up, and return home to my waiting family. This moment of quiet—sitting by the pond, a cool breeze blowing, watching the ducks and squirrels within a few feet of me, and hearing an occasional violin in the distance, is just another gift of the Institute experience. And I am grateful. **es**

Jan McClure is originally from Des Moines, Iowa, where she began violin studies with James Brauninger. She holds a Bachelor of Music degree in violin performance and string pedagogy from Brigham Young University, where she studied with David Dallon and Henri Temianka. She has had Suzuki teacher training from well-known pedagogues John Kendall, Hiroko Driver, William Starr, and Linda Fiove and additional training from Mimi Zweig. Jan maintains a private studio in Tazewell, Virginia, and for the past five years, she has served on the faculty of the Virginia Suzuki Institute, held on the campus of Emory and Henry College.

Jan and her husband, Mike, are the parents of eight children, all of whom have studied violin, viola, and/or piano.

Alleviating Frustration

By Dr. Susan Baer

Is there a musician in the history of the universe who has not experienced frustration during practice, at least on occasion? Let's face it—learning to play a musical instrument is challenging, and practicing is hard work! Because musicians are generally passionate people and because we value excellence, it is only natural that tears or a mild tantrum might disrupt the occasional practice session. In his book, *Talent is Overrated*, Geoff Colvin shares an enlightening perspective on the practice process:

"Instead of doing what we're good at, we insistently seek out what we're not good at. Then we identify the painful, difficult activities that will make us better and do those things over and over. After each repetition, we force ourselves to see—or to get others to tell us—exactly what still isn't right so we can repeat the most painful and difficult parts of what we've just done. We continue that process until we're mentally exhausted."

Is it any wonder that frustration is a byproduct of effective practice?

Most exhibitions of frustration occur when expectations exceed results on the part of the student, the parent, or even the teacher. We can strive to keep frustration at bay by maintaining a healthy balance of challenge and satisfaction.

Maximum Efficiency

First of all, it is important that basic human needs are fulfilled. A tired, hungry, thirsty individual is not equipped to make the most of a practice session. We must approach the task with a body that is primed and ready. Recent research [reported by the Society for Neuroscience] indicates that deep sleep is essential for processing new information and securing procedural or skill-building types of memory. What this means is that we can't really expect to see the fruits of our labors until the next day or after several days of organized repetitions. In a 1992 German study of conservatory musicians, researchers concluded that the highest achievers not only spent more time practicing, but they did most of their practice in the late morning or early afternoon while they were still fresh. They got more sleep, both at night and by taking afternoon naps.¹ Perhaps this explains why late-night and last-minute practicing is not very productive or enjoyable!

Frustration arises because the brain understands the task many repetitions before the muscles have had a chance to file it into the I-couldn't-possibly-do-it-another-way category.

Consistency

The aforementioned research supports the idea that it is important to maintain a daily routine of practicing in order to produce this ideal sequence of skill-building (practicing) and memory integration (sleep). In a series of essays titled *Practicing for Artistic Success*, Burton Kaplan states:

"To develop consistent control, you must practice on consecutive days. Skipping a day increases the possibility of forgetting. When you achieve your first success, your experience is stored in what psychologists refer to as short-term memory. It takes three to five consecutive days of repetition for what is stored as short-term memory to be transferred to long-term memory. When you have the feeling that your control is automatic, that it seems to occur without your trying, your control is stored in long-term memory. Your confidence and consistency of control will not be at an optimum level if you leave daily gaps in your practice schedule."²

It can be very frustrating to lose the skills you practiced so hard to attain only because you lost a day or two of practice. On the subject of consistency, Dr. Suzuki simply said, "You don't have to practice every day, only on the days you eat!"

Do It Again

In order for any task to become easy and stored in long-term memory, it is important for each specific skill to be repeated in a desirable manner. In order for your muscles to perform any given task consistently, they must practice doing it the same way many, many times. Frustration arises because the brain understands the task many repetitions before the muscles have had a chance to file it into the I-couldn't-possibly-do-it-another-way category. It's a constant struggle between the quick-witted brain and the recalcitrant muscles! Repetition is the key to excellent muscle memory. Dr. Suzuki said, "Skill is knowledge plus 10,000 times." There are many amusing ways of accomplishing repetitions such

as rolling dice, drawing from a deck of cards, counting marbles, etc.

Verbal Applause

There are several basic principles rooted in the Suzuki philosophy that will help curb frustration. One of the most important of these principles is the idea of maintaining a positive practice and lesson environment. Parents and teachers alike are encouraged to follow each performance with verbal applause, giving a positive comment regarding a specific aspect of what we've heard and seen. We can help orchestrate success by guiding the student to make sure that posture and position are secure before the first note is played. If posture and position are not established at the outset, it is unlikely things will improve during the course of performance. And it saves the teacher or practice partner from having to make corrections during or after the performance. It is also helpful to encourage the child to focus on one particular aspect of technique or musicianship before he/she begins to play. A person, especially a child, is only able to focus on one thing at a time, and if asked to think about more than one thing, the likelihood of success is slim.

Simplify

Another source of frustration is choosing a task that is too difficult. If

you carefully analyze any given trouble spot, you might find that there are several problems. It is a good idea to tackle only one problem at a time. For example, if you encounter intonation issues, eliminate rhythm, bowings, and articulations, and play the passage in even legato notes, focusing solely on playing each note in tune. If string crossings are a problem, eliminate the fingers and play the passage on open strings. If rhythm is the problem, count and clap the passage, then play it on a single pitch many times before adding the written pitches and articulations. Make each small or simplified step easy enough that the probability of success is very high. Repeat each step many times. With each new day, rather than starting from where you left off the day before, repeat the sequence of preparatory steps, but with fewer repetitions.

A second way to approach a problem spot is to reduce the practice segment to the minimum number of notes required to solve the problem. It may involve only two notes if the struggle involves something like an awkward interval or a tricky shift. After this unit is mastered through repetition, the next step is to incorporate it into the phrase by making a new practice unit which includes notes preceding and following the original unit.

Listen

In my experience, insufficient listening to the repertoire is the number one source of frustration. Listening is actually more important than practicing in terms of learning a piece in a relatively effortless and timely manner. The student needs to listen enough that the sound of the piece is memorized. The melody, harmony, tone quality, rhythms, form, articulations, and expressive devices are internalized before the fingers attempt to coax notes from the instrument. In order to alleviate future frustration, begin listening to pieces in upcoming volumes well in advance, and get a heavy dose of the most imminent ones. Keep listening to recent pieces as well because the ear deciphers more details as the piece becomes more familiar.

Critical listening is a habit and a skill that will serve a person in many capacities. This skill might help a future mother to recognize a breathing abnormality in her infant or it might help a future physician to detect an anomaly in a heartbeat. As an orchestral musician, listening is the first thing I do when I start to practice music for an upcoming concert. Why? Because it substantially reduces the amount of time I will have to practice, and time is a commodity that I value highly.

Mistakes Are Good

Often times, musicians are disappointed when they make mistakes. In his book, *Intelligent Music Teaching*, Robert Duke writes, "All intelligent, skillful professionals recognize that error is an inevitable, necessary, and even productive part of thinking and learning."⁴ As developing musicians, we would do well to embrace this idea: mistakes are good. They point out to us those things that still need work. Every failure elucidates the path to success.

For the Joy of It

Sometimes it can be frustrating always to be struggling and working and repeating. When do we get to experience the joy? Will the first time we play a piece uninterrupted be when we get up on stage to perform? It is important that opportunities be designed to play for enjoyment: times when a child knows there will be no corrective feedback, no repetitions of a phrase fifty times, no reminders

about that recurring posture problem. There should also be opportunities to practice performing. Arrange concerts for friends and family or for an audience of stuffed animals, or plan a program for a retirement home. Choose only polished review pieces. Follow with enthusiastic applause!

This list of ideas certainly won't rid your practice sessions of frustration, but perhaps it will suggest that this sensation is to be expected and that it's okay to feel a degree of frustration. Daniel Coyle writes in his book *The Talent Code*:

"Deep practice is built on a paradox: struggling in certain targeted ways—operating at the edges of your ability, where you make mistakes—makes you smarter."⁵

It takes a lot of hard work to build a strong brain and a beautiful heart! ✦

Endnotes

1. Geoff Colvin, *Talent is Overrated: What Really Separates World-Class Performers from Everybody Else*. (New York: Penguin, 2008), 71-72.
2. K. Anders Ericsson, Ralf Th. Krampe, and Clemens Tesch-Romer, "The Role of Deliberate Practice in the Acquisition of Expert Performance," *Psychological Review*, 100, no. 3 (1993), 363-406.
3. Kaplan's essays have been assembled in the following book where a similar quote can be found: Burton Kaplan, *Practicing for Artistic Success: The Musician's Guide to Self-Empowerment*. (New York: Precept Development Techniques, 2004), 42.
4. Robert A. Duke, *Intelligent Music Teaching: Essays on the Core Principles of Effective Instruction*. Austin, Texas: Learning and Behavior Resources, 2005, 46.
5. Daniel Coyle, *The Talent Code*. (New York: Bantam, 2009), 18.



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Susan Baer is a free-lance violist and violin teacher. She currently divides her time between Lubbock, Texas, and Whidbey Island, Washington. In her four decades of experience with the Suzuki method, Susan has run a thriving private studio, co-founded a Suzuki school, organized

workshops, taught in a long-term training program, and served on the Board of Directors of her local foundation. Susan is in high demand as a Suzuki clinician and registered SAA violin teacher trainer. She has served as area coordinator for four SAA conferences, has been published in the SAA journal, and is currently serving on the SAA Board of Directors. Dr. Baer holds a Bachelor of Music Education degree, a Master of Music degree in violin performance, and a Ph.D. in Fine Arts.



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Never Too Old To Twinkle!

By Debbie Meece

Okay, Suzuki community, I'm coming out of the closet concerning my memorization skills, or should I say, the lack of them! Before you turn the page, shaking your head and muttering, "And she is a Suzuki teacher?" please, hear me out.

I am 57 years young and a latecomer to the Suzuki philosophy. After teaching violin and viola to children in a traditional manner for many years, and even using the Suzuki repertoire as the foundation of my teaching, I found myself burned out. Too many students were not progressing as I hoped they would. Coupling that with the frustration of not knowing how else to "say it" to a student struggling to play better, my burnout finally came to a head. I decided I had to change my approach to teaching or stop teaching altogether; hence, my investigation into the "Suzuki Approach."

Skeptical at best, I attended my first Suzuki Institute in Atlanta, Georgia, in June, 2006, with Carrie Reuning-Hummel as my Book One Teacher Trainer. I was amazed and fascinated with her depth in teaching us how to present the "Twinkles" and "Pre-Twinkles" to a young child. I had never heard such a well thought-out approach to starting a beginning student. From bowhold to posture to setting the left hand correctly over the strings to tonalization, I was floored. Humbly, I realized how much I had been omitting from my teaching, and after briefly considering an entirely different line of

work, I made up my mind to apply the Suzuki principles to my own teaching. How could I not incorporate them into my teaching when I saw them applied so successfully? As part of the requirement to register the Book One Teacher-Training with the Suzuki Association of the Americas, I spent hours observing Carrie, and other fine Suzuki teachers, working with violin students at all levels and resolving their individual playing problems, step-by-step.

Here is where the memorization issue begins. As I learned more about the Suzuki philosophy, the Suzuki Triangle of Parent-Teacher-Child, the "Mother-Tongue" reasoning behind bathing a child in beautiful music from birth and starting children as young as three or four on violin and other instruments, I realized how deficient my own training had been in regard to listening and experiencing the music within my soul. I had always had a piece of music in front of me when I played, since the age of five, when I started taking piano lessons. I remember vividly how confused I was about reading the notes on the page. I look back and realize that it was like trying to learn a different language, when I could barely read English!

My initial experience with memorization was a disaster. At my first recital, I could not remember any more of my solo piece than the introductory "Oompah-pahs." I was told to play them again, and yet again, and then to curtsy and sit down in my seat among the other piano students. I remember

the tears streaming down my cheeks as I shivered with failure, knowing I would have to face my parents after my musical fiasco. It was at that moment that I unconsciously made up my mind never to let such a thing happen again. It became my mantra: "Never ever again will I play without the music." Surprising as it sounds, I never had to memorize a piece again. Somehow I managed to graduate from a fine music conservatory as a Music Education and Viola major without having to memorize a piece of music.

Now, fast-forward to my first Suzuki Institute in Atlanta, 2006. None of the children whom I observed used printed music. None of the teachers I observed used printed music. Everyone around me was playing from memory. It seemed that the music was a part of them, that it flowed so naturally from their beings. I knew that I could not do this. Worse yet, I feared that I could never learn to do it. Sure, I could play many of the Book One pieces without the music from having played them so many times in the past, but I knew that I could not play from memory the pieces toward the end of Book One. What about the pieces in Book Two, Three and Four? How could I become a Suzuki teacher without being able to memorize? Help!

Toward the end of the week-long session in Atlanta, Carrie Reuning-Hummel gave each of us a 10-minute private consultation to ask one question concerning the Suzuki philosophy. I knew what I wanted to ask, but could I

actually form the words and utter the truth about my deep dark secret of not being able to memorize? Would I cry? Would she dismiss me as a Suzuki Flunkie? Would I be branded forever with an "MF" on my forehead for "Memorization Failure"?

My turn to meet with Carrie finally came. With hands wet with perspiration and an uncomfortably dry throat, I entered the room and sat down in the designated chair across from her. My mind raced: could I actually utter the words to her, a former student of Dr. Suzuki, that I cannot memorize?

Her gentle eyes met mine, as she asked if I had a question. Shamefully, I recounted my first piano recital memory-failure. I glanced toward her to see if she was going to pronounce me a Suzuki Flunkie and ask me to leave. My eyes caught a glimpse of reassurance that caused me to look at her and listen to what she had to say about my memory issues. She kindly reassured me that as I developed my skills as a Suzuki teacher I would also develop the skill of memorization. She emphasized that I listen over and over to the CDs of the pieces in the Suzuki books. Carrie assured me that through listening and repetition I could memorize, and that this deficiency in my background would resolve over time.

I have been fortunate to have had Teri Einfeldt as my Book Two Teacher Trainer and Kimberly Meier-Sims as my Book Three Teacher Trainer, both of whom continued to encourage me toward successfully conquering my memorization frontier. Teri answered, with a personal poignancy when I confessed my memorization problems to her: "You're not the only Suzuki teacher to have memory problems, myself included; especially among those who have been traditionally trained." In fact, one of the most encouraging statements made to me concerning my memorization skills was from Kimberly Meier-Sims when she reminded me with a wink that there was nothing wrong with my memory: "You learned to speak English just fine!"

I am forever grateful to Carrie Reuning-Hummel for initially embracing

me. I am now studying Suzuki Book Four Teacher Training with another fine master Suzuki teacher, Carol Smith, at the Blair School of Music in Nashville. I confessed my memory deficiencies, and Carol gently encouraged me to keep listening and allow myself the freedom to use trial and error as I pick out the notes of a piece. She suggested memorizing only one piece at a time and singing it from memory in an attempt to decide whether the challenge is in the melody, rhythm or bowing.

I think a big part of never having developed the skill of memorization came from the false notion that if I couldn't play it from memory on my very first try then I could not play it by memory period. I needed to allow myself the freedom to find the notes of a piece without the self-imposed, crippling expectation that I must do it right the very first time. Technical difficulties, when looked upon as skills in need of further development, often become our greatest successes. Slowly, but surely, I am memorizing the Suzuki repertoire!

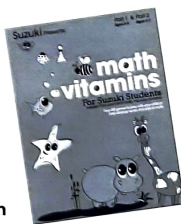
So, a reminder to the Suzuki teachers of the world: Along with the four-year-olds in your studio learning to "Twinkle," there may be a 57 year old who has also embraced the philosophy that you are "Never Too Old to Twinkle!" *

* Acknowledgement goes to Dr. Kay Guller MacLaughlin for the excerpt from the title of her well-known book, *They're Happy Too Young and Never Too Old to Twinkle!* *

Debbie Meece graduated in 1975 from Peabody Conservatory of Music (Johns Hopkins University) with a Bachelor of Music degree in Music Education with an emphasis in viola. At Peabody, Debbie studied viola with the world renowned violist, Karen Tuttle. Debbie currently performs with the Harpeth Trio, and teaches violin, viola and piano in her private lesson studio, Harpeth Springs & Piano in Franklin, TN. Debbie is an avid student and supporter of the Suzuki approach to talent education.



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Meet Rose Taylor

By Ann Grabe



Rose Taylor, a student of mine, is a special person in my life who has helped me learn so much. These excerpts are from an interview held in my kitchen Easter afternoon, 2010.

Ann: Hi, Rose. I've been wanting to write an article about you for so many years. You have been such an inspiration to me. How long have you played cello?

Rose: I have played cello for 14 years. I started at 3^{1/2} years and will be 18 years old in May.

Ann: Tell me about why you are in a wheelchair and how that affects your life.

Rose: I was born with a disability. I didn't have a choice. I see things from a different perspective. I am trying to adjust to my own way to play the cello. My disability is called spina bifida. I was born with my spine looking like an unzipped zipper. When I was younger, I could actually move my legs a little bit. I would walk with crutches until a bike accident five years ago when I broke my lower back. I'm now in a wheelchair.

Ann to Lisa (Rose's mother): Do you remember approaching me about lessons for Rose?

Lisa: I approached you backstage after an orchestra concert. I was amazed you started children at 3 1/2 years old. My original goal was to have Rose to be able to do something special that would set her apart from her peers in high school when she reached that age. We reached that goal this last year and have gone beyond that now.

Ann: Rose, do you remember a time in your life when you didn't play cello?

Rose: No. My first memories of cello are of learning how to set up. You would move my foot, and then your dog Courgette would actually come and sit on my other foot. I really liked that.

Ann: What do you like and find the most challenging about cello?
Rose: I like learning how to memorize things. Music helped me to do fractions in elementary school. If I replaced numbers with notes, it helped me to figure out answers to problems.

I find reading music the most challenging aspect about learning the cello. I am more of an auditory learner. For example, in English class, I can learn easier if I watch a movie or listen to an audiobook. Also, right hand doesn't like being in the bowhold position. I just hold it in my fist. I find I have more control this way. I'm glad you have allowed me to do what works so that we can continue with the music. I do notice how you and my insitute teachers keep revisiting my bowhold.

Ann: So what are your challenges in reading music?
Rose: I find it difficult to figure out how long to hold a note. I feel it is the opposite of math. I need to put the notes into numbers and then add them up.

Ann: So what is this contraption attached to your wheelchair? It looks really neat. Who made it, how does it work?

Rose: It looks like a football helmet, doesn't it? People ask sometimes what sport I'm in. My dad made it. There's a clip on the back of my cello which attaches to a square rod. The rod is attached to the frame of my wheelchair. In this way my cello is directly attached to my wheelchair. I don't need an endpin.

Ann: What groups do you perform with?

Rose: I play in both the Corvallis Youth Symphony (the honors orchestra for high school students; entrance is by audition only) and the Willamette Valley Community Orchestra. My mom plays clarinet in the community orchestra and is also the orchestra manager. This is the first time Mom and I get to play in the same orchestra.

I played in several other groups before this. My favorite concert of all time was "The Brandenburg Bash." We played the

Brandenburg Concerto No. 6, where I got to play with you. I remember that concert a lot. I remember watching the conductor sometimes, but watching you a lot because I was so lost! I had so much fun.

Ann to Lisa: How has your role changed over these fourteen years?

Lisa: At first I learned with Rose how to play the cello. Every week we knew exactly what to practice. We learned Books 1-10 two measures at a time. That is what I tell all the parents. Anybody can learn it two measures at a time.

At about Book Nine, I felt I was holding her back because she was able to learn the technique faster than I could. She became a much more agile learner. Finally on the third movement of the Boccherini Concerto in B₁ I backed off quite a bit. I still help her with the basics of rhythm, pitches, bowings, etc. Rose remembers really well the musical ideas presented in her lessons. I help her now on the piano instead of on cello. Tenor clef is still a challenge for me.

Ann: Do you go to lots of concerts?

Rose: Yes. It's kind of not a choice! Every day it feels like I'm either at a rehearsal or concert, whether I'm participating or not. We are always traveling somewhere to a concert.

Ann: Tell me about the support you receive from your extended family.

Rose: People from my family often come over for dinner in the week before a concert and I will play for them. My whole family is musical. They say I am doing a good job, but they especially like to give me pointers when they can. My mom and I currently play duets on a regular basis at a local restaurant and at the library. It's a family event—everyone comes.

Ann: What piece are you currently working on? What projects do you have in the future?

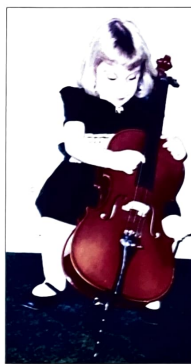
Rose: I'm working on the third movement of the J. C. Bach Concerto in C minor. I love the candenza. Next weekend I'll be performing "Kol Nidre" at my church and then again in Detroit next August because I just won the National Competition with the Oregon Network Five Arts Festival.

Ann: Do you go to Suzuki institutes in the summer?

Rose: I personally think Suzuki institute is the happiest place on earth. I like to go to classes that I actually enjoy. I can't wait to go to them. I think I've only missed one summer since I began playing cello. I especially remember David Holmes and Mr. Littrell. I would come every day with a new joke to tell Mr. Littrell. I like to learn new things and to play all the old pieces that I know like in group class at home.

Ann: You are a senior in high school this year, so what are your plans for the future?

Rose: I plan to either go to Western Oregon University or Linn Benton Community College. I want to do sound



Left: Rose at age four
Above: Rose today

recording for either the movie or music industry. I really like working with computers.

Ann: How did you come to acquire an electric cello in addition to your regular cello?

Rose: We first bought it for a cross-country trip in the car. Then later I discovered I could plug it in and instantly play very loudly for assemblies at school!

Ann: What do you think about the Suzuki Method?

Rose: It's the only thing I know. I like listening to all my pieces, and now I especially like listening to all the different interpretations on YouTube. I like that Mom takes such good notes at my lessons. My favorite pieces are Tarantella and Vivaldi's Double Concerto in G minor. At all my orchestra rehearsals, several of us just start spontaneously playing the Vivaldi and others love to join in. I'm glad I started at such an early age. I feel that I was born with music.

Ann: Thank you, Rose. ✪



Ann Grabe is principal cellist of the Oregon Mozart Players, the OSU Corvallis Symphony and plays with the Eugene Symphony. She currently has an active Suzuki cello program in Corvallis, Oregon, and also teaches string techniques and cello at Oregon State University.

Ann received a Musikarztehung and Aufbaustudium Diplom from the Musikhochschule in Stuttgart, Germany, and a BA specializing in performance and Suzuki education from Ithaca College in New York. During her five years of studies in Germany she taught cello at two music schools and performed extensively.

Ann lived in Lyon, France, for seven years. She taught at l'Institut Musical Suzuki de Lyon, which was housed in a centuries-old silk factory on the banks of the Rhone. While there she became the first recognized Teacher Trainer of Suzuki Cello in France. She founded their cello program. Ann taught teachers in France, Spain, Finland, Sweden, Scotland and England. She is also a recognized Teacher Trainer by the Suzuki Association of the Americas.

Ann plays a cello built before the signing of the Declaration of Independence by Jean Louvet, a renowned maker of lutes and hurdy-gurdies.



A Four-Year Journey To Lightly Row

By Theresa Phillips

When I began my Suzuki Teacher Training two years ago, my thoughts blossomed with new ideas and the excitement of my newly acquired knowledge. I brimmed with the idealism of teaching children how to enjoy the violin and play *try awf!* I began this new journey reacquainting myself with the precept that “every child can.” Throughout my life as a Suzuki student, I witnessed many peers with instructors who were patient, challenging, encouraging, and thoughtful mentors. Role models provide such strong examples to follow, and I had observed many.

Thus, I thought the biggest challenge for me as a teacher would be the business aspect of having a violin studio, possibly communicating effectively with parents or working a teaching schedule into my own family's rhythm. Our children were seven, six and three years old. I would soon find an even bigger challenge.

When Elena announced her intention to play violin, I was ecstatic. She was three at the time and began on her box violin.

A few months later, my seven-year-old son, having watched his sister delight in learning to play, decided that he wanted to play violin, too. I wrestled with the idea, having heard that a sibling playing the same instrument can create extra competition and negative dynamics. I took him to see cellists in action, symphony concerts where I pointed out the great variety of instruments, the 4th of July parade where I helped him identify the woodwinds—he wanted to play violin.

Our son Loren was born six weeks early and spent the first week of his life in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. He came home a scrawny and seemingly weak infant. Within three months his body developed robust strength and his personality was absolutely pleasant—so called him Mr. Jolly! During his kindergarten year, we began occupational therapy. Early into this therapy, it became apparent that Loren was unable to cross his midline, a developmental skill acquired naturally by three year olds. In addition he was challenged by small motor skills, tasks that are simple and natural for most children were very challenging for Loren. And he was frustrated and self-conscious about his body's seemingly “inability” to do things in the same manner others could. This frustration permeated his life and our family life for months. As parents, the tension of wanting to provide the “mist” for our children and the realization that we were not in control of many factors was at times overwhelming.

We began violin lessons, practicing a little bit every day and trying to build music into our family's way of life so that it is something we simply do. Our eldest son, Luke, and my husband pursued Suzuki guitar, with weekly group lessons and quarterly recitals. I was teaching sixteen students and music became woven into our family fabric. What I thought most and was whether Loren really could learn to play violin. How can you play violin when your hands have trouble writing with a pencil? Would his inability to catch a ball affect how his

body could feel rhythm? But the goals behind teaching him to play an instrument were much broader than his simply learning the specifics of violin technique. I knew this cerebrally, but I could not fully grasp it. One day I opened a notebook to Dr. Suzuki's words:

“Teaching music is not my main purpose. I want to make good citizens. If children hear fine music from the day of their birth and learn to play it, they develop sensitivity, discipline and endurance. They get a beautiful heart.” —Dr. Shinichi Suzuki

I tapped these words where I could see them each day. This is what we wanted for our child—a beautiful heart. Every child can! It has urged me forward—sometimes on days when I had to rely on someone else's wisdom ... it was not always part of my being. My other students would come in each week, sometimes having made incredible strides. With my own son, we practiced the same things many times over: months of strengthening exercises when incremental steps were successful. All along there was frustration and at times, conflict. He learned the Twinkles and Lightly Row, his mind very much ahead of his body's ability.

This week my son played in a group for the first time on a stage. For months he has been saying that he would not play in front of anyone. For months, we have been moving forward every day, in incremental steps. Six weeks ago he played his violin for Grandma and Grandpa. Two weeks ago he got on his instrument when a family friend asked to hear him play. My mother told me that Loren would gain many things from an institute experience if all he did was walk around with his case in his hand and arrive at each class. Since the first day here he has been at ease, comfortable with where his ability level is, comfortable in his own body, appreciating strong mentorship and smiling in the company of other musicians!

As a mother and a teacher, I have experienced extraordinary ownership of “Every Child Can!” And I know that it will hold this knowledge forever in a meaningful light. My heart feels more beautiful. ☺

—Written at the conclusion of the family's summer institute experience.

Theresa Phillips has been involved in the Suzuki community since she was nine years old. She received a Bachelor of Science degree in Biological Sciences with Honors from Stanford University and a Master of Science degree in Marine Biology from the University of Oregon. After continuing to play for various orchestras, she returned formally to Suzuki education and teacher training after her children were both. She has enjoyed teacher training courses with Tad Ercole, Kathleen Spring, Julia Hande, Ann Montzka-Snecher and Nancy Jackson.

Theresa currently teaches 20 private students out of her home studio, Inlakes Violin Studio, and is active in her local Suzuki community, where she serves as President of the Pikes Peak Suzuki Music Association. She especially enjoys being a Suzuki parent. Originally from Montana, Theresa and her husband currently live in Montrose, Colorado where they also enjoy hiking, biking, and skiing with their three children.

Latin American Update



Compiled by Caroline Fraser

From the Suzuki Association of Peru:
Caroline Fraser and Roberta Centurion

I Encuentro de Alumnos Suzuki de América Latina
(The First Latin American Suzuki students “Get-together”)
January 9th through the 12th, 2010, Lima, Peru

This was an historic occasion for Suzuki programs in the Americas and the result of a longtime dream of the Latin American Suzuki teachers. An “Encuentro” is literally a “meeting together.” Children from 11 Latin American countries from diverse cultures and backgrounds traveled to Lima, Peru, to share their music and experiences and to form the First Latin American Suzuki Students’ Orchestra.

The idea of having an all Latin American Suzuki Orchestra was born during our Latin American Teachers’ Conference and was further motivated by the success of the Latin American Ensemble at the 2008 SAA Minneapolis Conference. During the 2009 Suzuki Association of Peru annual festival representatives from each participating country enthusiastically proposed the project as a way to help celebrate the 25th International Festival to be held by the Suzuki Association of Peru.

Without any idea of how much work it would entail, what it would cost and all that would be involved, we charged ahead. Each country sent us an arrangement of their traditional music, which was

then sent out to the country representatives. Each country devised a process for selecting the children who would attend, rehearsed the children and helped make the travel and accommodation arrangements. There were several late starts as some music had to be transposed and some parts—including the conductor's score, were missing. Pianists would either play on multiple electric pianos, or sing in the choir and play percussion instruments. Each country would provide the pianists for their piece. The music was scored for string orchestra, recorders, flutes, guitars and percussion; the Peruvian piece included the children playing the traditional panpipes.

Elor Canelis from Casco and Caroline Fraser in Lima coordinated these initial stages throughout the year, with unconditional support from a local team of teachers (including Chao-Kong, Lindsey Pre, Maria Luisa Labarthe, Nimená Marks, Luciana Castillo, Cristina Pinto) and our invaluable Association secretary, Deiss Cortera. They helped take care of the logistics, arranging a concert in a public place requires endless paperwork in Latin America. “Almost frantic” phone calls were made across the continent (thank you, SKYPE! “How many first violins do you have? Can you confirm how many children are coming?”)

Children in participating countries rehearsed their parts, sometimes on their own, sometimes in ensemble. Teachers volunteered their time to help. We had asked that the music be memorized. Parents made the commitment to travel, and each country decided on a traditional dress for the Gala Concerts. In Peru it was decided that the children would wear the traditional dress of the three main regions of the country: the jungle, the mountains and the coast.

I Encuentra de Alumnos

Paraguay



Costa Rica



Ayacucho, Perú



Suzuki de América Latina

Chile



Ecuador



Brasil



Bolivia



Columbia



Cusco, Perú



Argentina



Mexico



Huancavelica, Perú



Lima, Perú



United States





Top: Huancavelica boys smiling
Above: Scarlett

Many of the children also registered to participate in the festivals surrounding the Encuentro. The decision was made to start rehearsing these children in a special workshop during the festival. Dario Dominguez from Buenos Aires, Argentina, agreed to conduct and teachers were asked to lead the sectionals, including a vocal teacher to work with the choir, and Kike Pinto from Cusco to work with the children on panpipes.

We were anxious to see how this orchestra of 170 children, including some young book two students, would sound. The youngest participant was four-year-old Catalina who had traveled with her mother from Patagonia, Argentina! At the first rehearsal, Dario was surprised at how well the children were prepared. Many had come with all eleven pieces memorized! The children rehearsed with discipline and perseverance.

After only one day of full rehearsal with all children present, we took the children to perform in Comas, an economically disadvantaged district in Lima where the public does not have access to concerts and music lessons. This was an emotional experience for everyone. The church was

packed with people standing around the sides and at the back. The doors at the entrance were left open so that the public standing outside could also hear. The audience clapped with the music, sang and wouldn't let us go. They cheered when Dario dipped into his briefcase to search for a score for yet another encore. The performers were moved to be received with such warmth and passion.

The following day was the Gala Concert in the Auditorium Santa Ursula in San Isidro. The children looked radiant and colorful as they came on-stage by country in their national dress accompanied by their flag. The sole representative of the United States, David Morales Boroff, borrowed a flag from the U.S. Embassy and took a bow with his mother, Silvia. The orchestra delighted the audience and the Suzuki Association of Peru received an award from the Peruvian Ministry of Education.

The Encuentro was far more than children coming together to play in an orchestra: for many children it was their first time in a foreign country; for many Peruvians it was their first time in the capital city; and for all children it

was their first time to be with so many children from so many different countries. Music brought everyone together. As the children had each other goodbye, exchanging parts of their traditional dress, we were made aware of the friendships and bonds which had been formed. The children demonstrated a pride in their national and regional identities and yet were united through music. Surely this was Dr Suzuki's dream: universal understanding through music.

**XXV Festival Internacional, Lima, Peru, January 4-30, 2009
Celebrating 25 Suzuki International Festivals!**

- **Courses with official recognition from the Peruvian Ministry of Education:** Peruvian educators have to continue their professional enrichment accumulating "credits." The courses offered through the Suzuki Association of Peru can now count for this official credit.

- **Participation from the Peruvian jungle for the first time:**

Thanks in part to a scholarship agreement with the Ministry of Education, and an agreement with the National System of Youth Orchestras, four teachers from the jungle city of Iquitos were able to travel and take teacher training courses. The only way to travel to Lima from Iquitos is by river and road, which takes a few days, or by plane which is expensive for local people. The participants took courses in Early Childhood Education, recorder, violin and double bass. Thanks to a generous donation from a Suzuki piano teacher in California, Gretchen Klein, Daniel Manrique attended on a full scholarship with his airfare paid. He was so enthusiastic about his courses that he returned to Iquitos determined to host the Suzuki Association of Peru's next National Workshop in his city. This would be the first such workshop in the jungle region of the country.

- **Dalcroze workshop for teachers and students for the first time:** Clives Mulati from Brazil taught an introductory course to more than 60 teachers. This demonstrates the level of interest in music education



Top: Huancavelica performers Above: Children helping children

in Latin America and the scarcity of opportunities to learn.

- **Participation from the USA, Canada, Europe, 12 Latin American countries and many parts of Peru:** Participants travelled from Argentina, Bolivia, Brasil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, México, Paraguay, Uruguay, Venezuela, USA, Scotland and Canada. In Peru the regions of Ancash, Apurimac, Arequipa, Ayacucho, Cajamarca, Cusco, Huancavelica,

Huánuco, Ica, Junín, La Libertad, Lambayeque, Loreto, Piura, Puno, Tacna and Lima were represented.

- **Of the 300 teacher participants more than a third attended on scholarships thanks to our donors.** The Suzuki Association of Peru believes that its events must be accessible to all. In a country where 50% of the population lives in poverty this necessitates a viable scholarship program.
- **Of the 400 student participants**

more than a quarter attended on scholarships.

The British Peruvian Cultural Association made a generous donation to our scholarship fund in order to help disadvantaged families attend the festival.

Many teachers were enrolled in general education courses such as Early Childhood Education, Talent Education, Kodaly and Dalcroze.

These courses are for teachers who do not necessarily have a musical background but who want to enrich their own experiences and those of the children they teach.

- **Kodaly 2 workshop was offered in addition to Kodaly 1.**

More than 60 teachers were enrolled in each course. The teacher trainer, Lydia Mills from California, delighted the participants with an ample repertoire of songs and games in Spanish, demonstrating how to introduce music literacy in the classroom.

- **More than 80 participants were enrolled in philosophy.**

The Suzuki philosophy is for everyone!

- **Guitar Book 9 and flute Book 12 were taught.**

Eugenia Aizaga travelled from Ecuador to study Flute Book 12 with Kelly, and MaryLou offered Guitar Book 9 to participants from Argentina and Peru.

- **Tanya Carey traveled with her daughter Trina and grandchildren Tatum and Logan.**

They gave an inspiring family concert (3 generations of cellists!) and Logan performed a Book Seven Graduation Concert.

Doris Koppelman traveled with her student David and his mother Shkia. David gave a wonderful solo concert, played solos on all the daily student recitals and played with the Latin American students' orchestra.

- **Amongst the participants were self-taught musicians from remote areas of Peru.**

If you live in a place where there are no music teachers and you want to learn, what can you do? Participants from

Huancavelica in the Andes and the city of Iquitos in the jungle told me that they had learnt to play their instruments with the help of the internet and occasional tourists. They are now determined to share their knowledge with their local communities and build music programs.

- **Practice teaching component continues to be an obligatory part of every unit beyond Book One.**

Every participant beyond Book One has welcomed the opportunity to give a lesson and receive feedback on her teaching from the teacher trainer.

- **Check our videos and photos on:**
Facebook: Asociación Suzuki del Perú
Youtube: Asociación Suzuki Perú
- **Thanks to our dedicated SAA Teacher Trainers:**

Tanya Carey, Virginia Dixon, Caroline Fraser, Doris Koppelman, Nancy Lokken, Eduardo Ludueña, Marilyn O'Boyle, Fernando Piñero, MaryLou Roberts, Mary Halverson Waldo and Kelly Williamson for their professional expertise and generosity of spirit.



Office teamwork

- **Thanks to our main sponsors:**

This festival would not have been possible without the generous sponsorship from the Suzuki Association of the Americas. Thanks also to Newton College, the US Embassy in Peru, the British Peruvian Cultural Association and Latin American Scholarship Fund donors from the United States, Canada, England, Scotland, Germany and Norway. In addition, a special thank you to our dedicated teachers, office staff, Suzuki friends and families in Peru who continue to support our festival. As Dr. Suzuki always emphasized, working together we can help create a better world!

Anunciamos el XXVI Festival Internacional, Lima, Perú, Enero 7-31, 2011.

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The Peru 2010 Adventure: A Mom's Reflection

by Sylvia Morales

My son David and I recently had the wonderful opportunity to attend the 25th annual Suzuki Music Festival in Lima, Peru, where David had 2 1/2 weeks of intense, exciting, beautiful and emotional experiences making music, making friends and celebrating with Suzuki students, parents, teachers and community from all over Latin America. The months leading up to our New Year's Day departure to Peru included planning and preparing several fundraising recitals in community and house concert settings, with enthusiastic and generous guidance and support by David's piano teacher, Doris Koppelman.

Last summer Caroline Fraser, the director of the Lima Festival invited David to the upcoming 25th annual festival of January, 2010. She suggested he perform a piano recital as an invited guest for one of the many evening concerts during the three-week festival. David also was scheduled to demonstrate as a student of advanced piano repertoire being coached by Doris Koppelman in her teacher training classes which were attended by many teachers from all over Latin America. I had the unique opportunity to translate for Doris' classes, and I found that what really helped me were my 10 years of observing and taking notes at David's weekly piano lessons back home in San Diego, California. Being a teacher myself, I truly appreciate the complex and subtle issues involved in communicating teaching ideas and experiences. The teachers were eager learners, asking intelligent and thoughtful questions. I quickly became aware that this was an extremely important time—these teachers were gaining new skills and perspectives from a master teacher on how to approach the training of their own piano students back in their home countries, and I was assisting in this process in a very direct way. Doris was extremely sensitive to their concerns, and along with succinct explanations, many answers were clarified after my translation as she sat at the piano and demonstrated her points in movement and making music. Several teachers also expressed to me how much they appreciated and learned by observing Doris coach David, her advanced student who has benefited from 10 years of her Suzuki piano training.

On another note, back to last summer when Caroline found out that David also has been studying violin for the past four years. (from a wonderful teacher in San Diego, Nick Stanton), she invited him to participate in the Festival's First Latin American Suzuki Students' Orchestra made up of Suzuki students from eleven different countries from Latin America. Music parts were emailed a month in advance so David had a chance to familiarize himself with the first violin parts of this beautifully unique repertoire with one piece representing

each Latin American country represented. Needless to say, these particular activities were planned before leaving for Peru, but several other wonderful, spontaneous opportunities for making music presented themselves during our 2 1/2 week stay.

Week one was filled with rehearsals and a few wonderful spontaneous jam sessions with professional Peruvian musicians. For three hours each morning, David had access to the grand piano in the large auditorium on campus to practice and prepare for his solo recital which was scheduled for the second week. Then came lunch, where David had lots of fun communicating in Spanish while his new friends practiced their English, all the while laughing at each other's mistakes and helping with translations. Lots of laughter and fun!

Each afternoon three hours were spent in orchestra rehearsals, whole group and sectionals. The coaches were magnificent! Teachers came from all the different countries and David had the marvelous opportunity to work with violin teachers from Peru, Argentina, Colombia, Bolivia and Mexico, and most all of the coaching of course was in Spanish. The wonderful, inspiring yet patient conductor was from Argentina, Dario Dominguez. He only had six rehearsals before the first performance, which was at a church in a very poor district of Lima. The audience was very appreciative, and the kids playing in the orchestra were inspired and worked hard to sound their best. They played five encores! It was a very moving evening.

The next two orchestral performances were in bigger halls, with a lot of pageantry and celebration. Before the performances, the delegations from each country paraded across the stage, with students in native dress, holding the instruments and teachers carrying the flag of their country. Because David was the only student from the United States, I had to help him hold up the flag of our country. What a moment! And after this incredibly colorful and moving presentation of flags and delegations, the students played a wonderful program of 11 Latin American pieces, some orchestrated with children's choir, and/or exotic Latin American percussion instruments. One piece was played by a large guitar ensemble, and the performances ended with a very young Peruvian boy and girl dancing as a pair in front of the orchestra. All the musicians enthusiastically accompanied them as the audience sang and clapped along to this popular Peruvian song.

During week two, David performed a different piece from his repertoire during the afternoon piano recitals where all the piano students attending had an opportunity to perform. This



Encuentro Concert

was the week the pianists attended the conference and had master classes. David was also able to attend the music appreciation course for teens and a Peruvian panpipe class. The week ended with two special concerts, first his solo piano recital as part of the evening concert of "Alumni and Invited Guests," in which he also performed the first movement of a Beethoven piano trio with two alumni of the Festival, a violinist from Guzzo, Peru, and a cellist from Lima. The last evening David was invited by a teacher from Paraguay to perform as a lead violinist with an ensemble of teachers from many different Latin American countries. They performed a tango by A. Piazzola and a traditional Peruvian folk song where David had the opportunity to take off on his improvising, fully supported by the generous teachers performing with him. This concert featured the Festival's many talented teachers playing music from their country on a variety of instruments.

There are so many wonderful memories from this adventure—I'm only able to mention a few. I met some incredible teachers, parents and kids, all so generous and genuinely enthusiastic about being involved in making music, sharing and being involved in the arts. Caroline Fraser, along with her hard working and dedicated team, has put together an amazing annual event, historic and wide-reaching. The generous and dedicated teacher trainers I met, alongside Doris Koppelman are all inspiring and a lot of fun! Both David and I made friends that we are keeping in contact with. This adventure was filled with love and lots of good times and was an amazing opportunity for my son David to share his love of music, learn about our beautiful neighbors to the south and to meet great people. I truly believe it has been a life-changing experience for both of us in a very good way. As I look back I see this event as an adventure acknowledging our family's love and commitment to music and the arts, and celebrating David's commitment to music and his spirit of sharing and honoring the dedication and generosity of his teachers. ☺

Sylvia Morales lives with her husband Phil and son David and is very close to her extended family in San Diego, where she was born and raised. She has lived, studied and worked as a dancer, teacher, performing artist and choreographer in New York, Los Angeles, and San Diego. Sylvia is a Juilliard alumni in dance and has a Master of Fine Arts degree in performance and choreography from U.C.L.A. She played violin in elementary and middle school orchestras. Music, dance and the arts have always been an important part of her life, thanks to her parents and all of the opportunities that she has had.



Caroline Fraser and Doris Koppelman



David, Doris Koppelman and Miguel



Encuentro Dancers

Reflections on Attending the 25th Annual Suzuki Festival of Lima, Peru

By David Morales Boroff

I had been preparing for this trip for a long time. Whether it had been in practicing my instruments (piano and violin), learning Spanish or packing clothes, I had done a lot of it, and there was no reason whatsoever to feel nervous about not being ready for my first trip out of the U.S. Needless to say, on the morning of our flight, January 1, 2010, I was so tense, I nearly threw up.

Back in August, I accepted an invitation from Caroline Fraser to come to the 25th International Festival in Lima, Peru. Caroline Fraser, the director of the conference, had invited me to do a solo piano recital at the end of the second week of the festival and to participate in the orchestra as a violinist. The next five months were spent retrieving some piano repertoire and learning a few new pieces. I planned several small recitals here in San Diego in order to help raise the money needed, primarily for travel (which was quite a lot). My repertoire was to consist of a Haydn sonata, two selections from a Bach French suite, a prelude and fugue, the piano part to the first movement of a Beethoven piano trio, a Chopin etude and nocturne, three Spanish pieces, a Debussy prelude and a Joplin rag. I was also to include a composition of my own, which was a structured improvisation including many elements of jazz and blues. That took a lot of time to get together, and, as fate has a special sense of humor when it comes to me, the thirteen pieces of orchestral music I was to memorize before I even went to Peru did not arrive by email until two days before I was scheduled to leave. It was at this point that our printer chose to bite the dust, so of course, we couldn't print any of it.

So it was that on the first day of the year at four a.m., I woke up after two hours of sleep and was rushed to the airport with my piano teacher, Doris Koppelman, my mother, my father, my uncle Bob, and no orchestra music. I felt really nauseous for no apparent reason, so, before we left, Dad threw together some white rice to settle my stomach—which didn't really help. When we said goodbye to my dad at the baggage check-in, he said that he'd miss us, and that I shouldn't worry about being sick—it was probably just nerves, and it would most likely get better once I was

on the plane. Honestly, I didn't believe him, because my mind had gone into automatic pilot, in accordance with my stomach. He turned out to be right, of course.

As it was New Year's Day, the security at the airport was even more stringent than usual. It's actually quite an interesting sensation to be frisked, especially if you're hoping against hope that you don't throw up on the security guard. My piano teacher likes to do things ahead of time, so we had a lovely two-hour relaxation period in the terminal of the airport, in which my mom and Mrs. Koppelman visited merrily, and I crouched over my paper bag, white-faced and sweating, waiting to deploy. Thankfully, I didn't, because the moment we boarded, and the plane took off, I felt completely well again. When I finally got comfortable in my seat, I started to enjoy the flight, and at one point, about five and a half hours in, I realized that this was probably the farthest I'd ever been away from home.

After an eight-and-a-half-hour flight, we arrived. It was a cloudy night and was actually raining, which it never would normally do in the middle of a January summer. It wasn't really all that different from any other city, except that almost every sign was in Spanish. But there was a certain vibrant energy about the place—it always seemed to be moving, even when we were driving through an empty street (it was two in the morning in Lima).

A mother and daughter, Haydee and Luciana, picked us up at the airport. They were the kindest people—they drove all the way across Lima at 1 a.m. to pick us up at the airport in a VW bus that was on the verge of dying. It actually "kicked the bucket" halfway to the hotel. So we waited for another two hours in the rain at a gas station while Haydee called two cabs for us, and Luciana called her boyfriend to help fix the bus. When we finally got to the hotel at four in the morning and said our goodbyes for the night, we were laughing fit to burst.

The Yveas Hotel where we stayed is decorated with beautiful paintings of Indian lifestyle. It's very homey, has two dining rooms of moderate size, and one pretty big one, with a small stage for musicians who performed every Saturday and Sunday.

Over the next couple of days, dozens of kids, parents and teachers from Brazil, Argentina, Columbia and Bolivia began to arrive at the Yveas to participate in the festival. The small children practiced on their instruments all day, morning till night, (the Yveas also had very thin walls) and ran up and down the stairs with their violins and violas, shouting and yelling in a fervor of ecstatic happiness. In short, it was a kind of wonderful, glorious madness.

Our first day in Peru was almost entirely spent sleeping. We eventually got up, got acquainted with the neighborhood outside, which was filled with little shops that fitted our every need, exchanged our money for Peruvian money (great for us as the exchange rate was unbelievable) and met the taxi that was to pick us up and bring us to a welcoming party at Caroline Fraser's house.

The party was fantastic. There were musicians of every sort—jazz, classical—wind, percussion, keyboard, strings—and we played and played late into the night. I played a lot of jazz violin with an unbelievable pianist. I also played a Spanish piece by Ernesto Halffter, while my Mom danced flamenco to it. The food and the company were also great. I was struck by how open Latin people are. People whom you're being introduced to for the first time would hug you and sometimes kiss you on the cheek, and it would be totally normal behavior. (You can imagine my face turning bright red.) All of the musicians at the party, whom I had never met before, were quite happy to play with me, even before they'd heard me play a note. I was definitely on a different, strange, wonderful continent.

I spent the next day getting to know the teacher trainers of the conference (really wonderful people, and great players) as we all walked around the neighborhood of Miraflores. We walked a lot. We walked through the park, which was decorated with statues and trees, and many young Latin couples. We walked among the shops, forever full and bustling. We walked down to the beach, where the rocks were large, smooth, and round and the water is a kind of silver color, reflecting the clouds above. These clouds actually did have a silver lining—the sun shone around the edges of them everywhere, brighter than someone from California would expect.

It was a kind of white light.

The rhythm of the city is interesting: it's a quick tempo. The drivers are very skilled, go very fast, and are forever honking at each other. This honking is different. In California, when you honk at someone, it's personal. You aren't saying, "Now let's please move along, shall we?" You're saying something more along the lines of, "MOVE, JERK!" In Peru, it's a kind of friendly, pushy cacophony. The horns on the cars aren't loud—they're musical and comic. There are different pitches, and the drivers don't lean on them; they tap them lightly, like they're playing little bells.

The next day, I went to Newton College, the venue for the conference. One of the great things about it was that it was a five-minute drive from the Yveas Hotel. The arts section of the school (where the conference was) built around a big courtyard with lunch tables and a food booth. On one side of the courtyard was the theater in which all the major performances would take place. The buildings surrounding the courtyard were three stories high and were made up of many classrooms. The bottom floor classrooms of these buildings were the ones with the pianos in them, and all of them were taken by someone or other all the time. This presented a problem, as I really needed to practice for my recital. Caroline Fraser came up with a brilliant solution. She proposed that I use three hours in the morning to practice in the theater on the best piano in the campus since it was not being used for classes or rehearsals at that time. Not only did I get three hours to myself for quiet, uninterrupted practice, I got to really feel the piano out and get accustomed to the acoustics of the hall and of the piano itself. After about two hours, the janitors started cleaning and listened to me play. This was not distracting on the contrary, it was helpful, as I was playing for an audience every morning and got used to it. The staff at Newton was always polite, friendly and very helpful. This was the routine for nearly all my mornings: wake up, go to a bakery called Karita's for breakfast, get to Newton College via taxi, practice piano in the theater from 9:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m., have lunch in the cafeteria, attend a three-hour orchestra

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rehearsal starting at 1:00 p.m., hang out around the school for a while, maybe watch Mrs. Koppelman teach her class, and then attend the nightly recitals, which started at 7:00 p.m.

I began studying violin back in San Diego four years ago with a wonderful veteran teacher named Nick Stamon. At first, I only wanted to familiarize myself with another branch of classical music, while always acknowledging the piano as my first instrument, but eventually the violin became the other focus of my life. On this trip, all the study and practice I had put into my relatively new instrument absolutely paid off.

The orchestra rehearsals were great. I got the music for the first violin parts my first day in Lima... and it was unbelievable music. We weren't playing Beethoven or Mozart. We were playing South American songs arranged for orchestra—one piece from each country represented at the festival (eleven in all), and two pieces from Peru. The pieces are full of gorgeous melodies and very complex rhythms. I had played Latino music before (I actually have a little Mexican and Honduran blood), and the music I've played in San Diego is no less beautiful, but it is different to play it in a Latin American country because *everyone* identifies with the music you are playing immediately. Playing this beautiful music for and with the people who love and relate to it is a priceless experience.

The kids in the orchestra were all great to hang around. Most were younger than me—9-13 years old on average—and they all had buoyant, bright personalities. Even the older kids seemed to emanate happiness, and they all loved the music, a nice change from regular youth orchestra, where there is at least a little bickering among the ranks about the piece. These kids had come from all over South America. To see all these cultures get together and play music around me, to be a part of that, was unbelievable.

The sectionals that sometimes took place in the allotted time for orchestra rehearsal were equally great. Most of the first violins were from Bolivia, and all of them were staying at the Yeyas. So, I got to hang out with them at the hotel as well, and made many friends. In fact, we got to like each other so much that sometimes

we could not stop talking, which caused some problems for the conductor, an Argentinean named Dario Dominguez, but he was always on top of the situation. He had an intensity about his conducting that always kept us focused while we were playing. When we started to talk or lose attention during rehearsal, he never lost his temper. He simply explained the situation to all of us and told us that it is useless to divert time from the orchestra, when we have the opportunity to play such beautiful music. We still never did quite shut up, but we got the point. Though I spoke relatively little Spanish, I could be friendly and effectively communicate with him, in spite of the fact that he spoke only a little English. He won all of our respect.

Another wonderful experience I had in relation to the orchestra was being directed in Spanish. Spanish was one of my first languages when I was very, very young; however, it was drummed out of me in elementary school where it was never spoken. I have never spoken Spanish in the last ten years as well as when I spoke it when I was five. Having all the directions given to me in Spanish by a conductor who could not translate it into English put my mind to work and made me learn it all the faster.

In fact, it was my lack of proficiency in Spanish that earned me many laughs from many people—in particular, from Sara, Mayra, and Cesar, some of my best friends in the whole festival. They were from Columbia, and Sara and Mayra understood about as much English as I understood Swahili—none, that is. Many a time I would forget and start speaking quickly in English. The looks on their faces were priceless! When I would say something really incorrectly in Spanish, it was first a look of confusion, and then they would glance at each other, and burst out in screaming laughter—not ridiculing, but with a kind of jubilant ecstasy, marveling at my stupidity. And, at this point, Cesar would look at me with a hopeless expression on his face, and say, quite simply, “womens.” We would hang out in the big patio at lunch and during break times, and visit, laugh and play violin together. It was wonderful. I made many other friends during this trip, but those three kids emanated light and

inspiration with every smile and every word they spoke, and it made me feel lucky to be around them.

Thursday was the first day of the really long orchestral rehearsals. I mean six hours. They were *really* long. These rehearsals, which went from Friday to Sunday, were quite fun, even though we were all pretty tired by the end of the day. The children's chorus, the sikuri (panpipes) players, and the Latin percussionists were included in these last rehearsals, and the sound was unbelievable! There were sections in some pieces that didn't quite make sense with strings and winds alone, but when everyone else came in, it became fantastic. When the big native drum played, it was like giants clapping in time to the music.

On Sunday, the orchestra had half of a rehearsal, because it was the day of our first performance. In the two hours or so between the rehearsal and when we all had to rendezvous at the bus for the ride to the concert hall, my mother and I went back to the Yeyas to have lunch, and take a little catnap. To my absolute delight, two professional Peruvian musicians were performing during the lunch hours—a guitarist and a cajon (a type of Latin drum) player, who both sang and played beautifully. After about the second number, I asked if I could play violin with them. I had never played Afro-Peruvian music before, and it sounded so good. It was so much fun to improvise with them, and after the first number, each of them stood up and actually *hugged* me. After about the third number, one of the Bolivian parents started dancing, and the rest of the kids, parents and teachers were our audience. I was in heaven. I played with them for about half an hour, to the cheers of everyone else in the room. We eventually had to leave for the school, but before I left, they both got up and hugged me again and told me how well I played, and how much they enjoyed it. I'll never forget how good it felt.

Soon after, we all left for Newton College in order to meet the bus that was going to take us to our performance venue. It was a church in the neighborhood of Comas. Comas is a very poor neighborhood. On the way there, we saw shacks, lots of graffiti, and lots of stray dogs in the streets. The trip there was over an hour long by bus. Luckily, I was able to go with the



David with Conductor Dario Dominguez and Colombian friends



Performance at a church in Comas



David with Professor Orlando



David with musicians at Hotel Yeyas

Columbian kids and teachers, so Sara, Mayra, Cesar, and many of their friends were on the trip with me. We spent the whole bus ride telling stories and jokes—most of which were completely lost in translation for them, but were fun anyway.

When we arrived at the church (a big building which was not very fancy), we spent about two hours waiting for the audience to arrive. We waited in a basketball court behind the church, warming up on our instruments and visiting. When we finally were called to

perform, we walked into the church from the side door, in front of the seats, which were packed. I walked up to my seat with everyone else, got myself set up, and looked to my left, at which point I realized that there were at least two hundred people packed into that church, waiting for us to play. They had crammed the seats, and there still wasn't enough room, so they just filled up the center and side aisles. When we got to our second piece, I glanced at the audience again, and realized that there were also about a hundred people standing outside, listening to us through

the open church doors. It was at this point that I realized that they probably didn't get too many orchestras playing in their neighborhood—certainly not for free. They were excited. Why else would so many people have shown up and stood outside to hear a bunch of young kids, albeit talented ones, play a bunch of songs? It was their music, their culture, presented grandly and proudly by an orchestra. I realized it was important to them.

They clapped riotously after every number. And with the church's acoustics, the noise was unbelievable. They simply loved us. The real killer was when they all started clapping and singing along with our last number, a Peruvian song called "La Veguera." They knew all the words. After that we got an encore. We hadn't prepared any, so we just repeated a piece. They went crazy anyway. We got another one ... and another. We ended up doing four encores that night, all repetitions of pieces we already had performed. They still loved us. All of the kids, including me, were on an extreme mental high after that performance. We had not seen that experience coming. At least, I didn't. It was one of the most magical performances I've ever been a part of. We spent the entire bus ride home singing.

The next day, we performed in another part of town, in a lovely hall and where two important things happened. One was the flag presentation. This was a ceremony before the concert in which every student in the orchestra would come in delegations from their countries, present their flag to the audience, wait for applause, and then take their seats in the orchestra. Since I was technically the only student from the U.S. participating in the orchestra, I got to go up with only my mom and present our flag. Since the cultural attaché of the U.S. Embassy in Peru was in the front row, this actually was quite an important thing for me to do. At one point in the performance, he nodded in acknowledgement to me.

The other important thing that happened was that I met Martin Cappi, the most advanced flute player in the festival. I had heard him play a flute concerto in one of the mighty performances at Newton College, and he really impressed me with his gorgeous tone, beautiful vibrato and

soaring sound. When I had the chance to visit with him as we waited for the second performance of the orchestra to begin, we became instant friends. I played for him on piano and violin, wanting like crazy to impress him. After I played he laughed and declared me "loco." My head swelled to twice its usual size. The next day, before our third and final performance at Newton College, I asked Martin if he felt like playing together, and he said "absolutely." It was at this moment that I realized that I didn't know any piano/flute repertoire, so I asked him if he knew how to improvise, and he said no.

"Would you like to learn?"

"Ah... sí, okay."

"Great!"

I showed him the chord sequence to a twelve-bar blues, and played a really slow backup for it. He then started to play, not too well at first, but eventually, after only about two minutes, he really began to get the feel of improvising. And what a pleasure to hear his magnificent ideas and incredible tone, as I played alongside on piano! To see him come alive and to help awaken that possibility of improvising inside him made me feel most strongly that there was a reason I was there. We would have continued for a long time, but we had to prepare for the performance. This was one of the more wonderful experiences I had in Peru, and it helped forge the friendship between Martin and me. Tuesday was the day that most of the students from the orchestra, including Mayra, Sara, left for their hometowns. It was very hard to say goodbye, but we promised to keep in touch. (email, facebook, thank you!)

On Thursday night of this second week of the festival I performed the 45-minute piano program for which I had been preparing for the past several months. I also began to rehearse the first movement of the Beethoven trio with two very talented musicians and alumni of the Lima festival, a cellist from Lima and a violinist from Cusco. The performance featured "Invited Guests and Alumni" and it was a blistering success. After the trio, I continued with my solos starting with the Haydn sonata, and then the rest of my repertoire. I think I performed with good technique, I made hardly any mistakes in the more difficult compositions, but

the reason I think that the recital was a success was that, from what people told me, it seemed to make the audience feel real emotion. One teacher told me that she had been feeling quite sick that day, and had almost not come to the recital, and that from the first note I played, she felt immediately better. That made me very happy. For an encore, I played a composition of my father's and mine, a Mexican love song without words.

The next day one of the teachers, Diogenes Gomez, wanted me to play violin in his tango group, which consisted of teachers from different Latin American countries—four violins, two cellos, a piano, guitar, and two singers. We were preparing to perform that same evening in the recital of Latin American music performed by the teachers attending the conference. I quickly learned the first violin part of a Piazzola tango, *Adios Nonino*, and a folk song from Paraguay, which was Diogenes' home country. I asked him if I could improvise on the Paraguayan folk song, and once he heard me try it, he added five repeats to the part I was to improvise on, just so I could do it more!

Sunday, our last night in Lima, was spent hanging out with Cesar, his family and new friends in the downtown sector. We were in an enormous town square,

surrounded by countless buildings of 16th century colonial Spanish architecture, which included Peru's presidential palace. It was the anniversary of the founding of the city, and there was a famous musical group playing Peruvian music on an outdoor stage. The crowd was enormous. The noise was unbelievable, and it was a great night to hang out with friends for the last time.

Monday, the last day of our trip to Lima I spent saying goodbyes at Newton College, taking photos and making sure to share emails. Later we went to a souvenir shop, and I got a hand woven jacket which I love to wear. It was a peaceful day, even though I was sorry to leave.

By the time we left for the airport, most of the teachers had left Peru already. We went through the old routine—long lines, water bottles confiscated, check-in, and security—although I didn't get frisked this time, nor was I feeling sick. On the plane flight home, I asked myself, "Well, David, what have you learned from this?" I thought about it for a while. It took me a while to decide what I had really gone away with now that I had officially traveled parts of the world.

After about an hour, I realized that it was that music, what I'm dedicating my life to, is a connector, a link between all

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people. I spoke limited Spanish, and yet I got along fine with so many people after they heard me play. The communication was in the notes, in the phrasing, in the dynamics. All I had to do was to play a piece for them, and they immediately knew who I was. My first impression of the people in Latin America was that they were more inspired and open than those of us who live in the U.S. Certainly they were more open ... but when I thought about it, I came to the realization that no one could *not* be inspired in such a charged atmosphere, so full of music. Music ... I suppose the best way of defining it is that it's a way of communicating, a language which expresses all that cannot be expressed through speech. It is universal inspiration, and it brought out the best in all of us. And then, I thought if we have something so large in common, if it can affect all of us so profoundly and so similarly, then perhaps all the different peoples of the world are not so different after all. On the outside, oh yes, definitely, we are different ... but not in what inspires us. And I think that's what counts. **CS**



David Morales Boroff is a sixteen-year-old violinist, pianist, and composer. He took up piano at five years of age, and violin at eleven. He plays classical music, jazz and blues on the piano, and various styles of jazz, blues, fiddling, flamenco, and classical music on the violin. He has played in various master classes and participated in several Suzuki conferences around the globe. He has attended the San Diego School of Creative and Performing Arts, and is currently homeschooled. His piano teacher of eleven years is Doris Koppelman, and his violin teacher of five years is Nick Stamen.



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Helen Gerald

By Barbara Barber

Helen Gerald, 91, of Amarillo, Texas died on Friday, April 30. Helen started playing the violin and piano at age seven, studying in Topeka and Kansas City. She earned her B. A. in music at Washburn University in Topeka, Kansas. She attended the National Music Camp in Interlochen, Michigan. Helen taught public school English and music in Kansas and Iowa for five years. She pursued graduate studies at University of Kansas, University of Iowa and University of Michigan. She was a violinist in Tri-City Symphony, (Iowa, Illinois), Houston Symphony, San Diego Symphony and Roswell Symphony. She married dentist Thomas Gerald in 1945. They moved to Amarillo in 1947 where they raised five children and Helen began teaching violin and viola.

Helen played in the Amarillo Symphony for 63 years, serving as 1st violinst, Concertmaster, Assistant Concertmaster and violinist; she also served as librarian, on the Board of Directors, Personnel Committee, Orchestra Committee and on the Executive Committee of Amarillo Youth Orchestra. Helen performed nearly 800 orchestral works with the Amarillo Symphony, some repeated many times over the years. Sixty-five Wenger Musician Chairs were contributed to the Amarillo Symphony

Orchestra in her honor by her family in 2006. She also performed with Randal Chamber Orchestra, Civic Chorus, musicals and operas at Amarillo College, West Texas A&M University, Amarillo Little Theatre, Chamber Music Amarillo and numerous church orchestras.

Helen was introduced to the Suzuki approach to teaching children by Suzanne Grooms, who moved to Amarillo in 1973. Helen was quickly convinced of the outstanding qualities of the Suzuki Method; thus began her second teaching career. Suzanne and Helen founded the Amarillo College Suzuki String Program where Helen taught violin and viola from 1976 to 2009. She served as Performance Coordinator and Director of Avanti Violins, played in the Amarillo College Faculty Trio and Faculty Quartet and presented numerous programs with her colleagues and students in the community. With daughter, Barbara Barber, Helen attended many Suzuki Association of the Americas, American String Teachers Association and Texas Music Educators Association conferences, workshops and institutes. A few weeks before her death, Helen led the *Twinkle Variations* at the Amarillo College Suzuki String Program Spring Concert and presented her student and great granddaughter, Bailey Smith, with her graduation certificate.

Helen was active in various civic groups and charitable foundations. A breast cancer survivor, Helen participated in the Race for the Care for many years, winning first place in her category numerous times. In addition to playing the violin, she enjoyed cooking, needlework, crossword puzzles and spending time with her family.

Helen was a devoted and faithful wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, musician and violin teacher. She loved her God, her family and her music with all her heart. She was gentle, humble and patient but incredibly strong and disciplined, always thinking of others and little of herself. She is greatly missed but leaves a legacy to her family and community. A memorial fund has been set up in Helen Gerald's name for the Amarillo College Suzuki String Program c/o Amarillo College Foundation, P.O. Box 447, Amarillo, TX, 79178.

**Helen Gerald
My Friend Remembered**

By Beverly de la Bretonne

On April 30, 2010, Amarillo College Suzuki String Program lost a dear friend, musician, teacher, mentor and colleague. Helen Gerald and I had been friends from the mid-1970s until her death. I first traveled to Amarillo, Texas, to give a small Suzuki workshop for my friend Suzanne Grooms. Suzanne and I had attended graduate school together in the late 1960s, studying Suzuki pedagogy with John Kendall. Suzanne had a dream that one day she and I would be able to teach in a program together. On my first visit to Amarillo, I was introduced to a lady named Helen Gerald, the wife of a well-known dentist. She performed in the symphony and was teaching violin using Dr. Suzuki's ideas. I quickly learned that Helen was extremely visible in the fine arts community as an outstanding musician, violinist, teacher and promoter of the arts. Helen and I immediately liked each other, and I knew that we would develop a strong friendship. For five summers Suzanne invited me to Amarillo to work with their students.

In 1976, Suzanne and Helen decided to join forces and approached Amarillo College about housing a Suzuki program. They met with success and the Amarillo College Suzuki String Program was born. Suzanne's dream became a reality when in 1979, following the death of my husband, I was hired to fill the violin position at Amarillo College. With this position I was also able to work with the Suzuki Program. We three teachers now formed our own Suzuki triangle, each of us leaning on the others' strengths. Over the years this program grew and viola and cello were added. Amarillo College Suzuki String Program has been very fortunate in that many of these early students are now our second generation of teachers. In 2000, Camille Day Nies was hired to coordinate the program. Suzanne's health had been declining, and in September, 2000, more than 50 students and former students played Twinkle at her memorial service.

I am so grateful that I came to Amarillo to begin a wonderful journey with Helen Gerald in my life. For 31 years we taught and traveled to symphony together. We attended many Suzuki conferences together where she always looked forward to rooming with her daughter, Barbara Gerald Barber. She loved to learn and continue to grow as a teacher and musician.

Helen was a great mentor for me as I moved into the Amarillo musical community. I will never forget a couple of comments that Helen made to me soon after I arrived in Amarillo: "I would rather play my instrument than eat," and "it has been my dream to play string quartets all night and maybe you will be the one to join me." We tried one evening, but by 1:00 AM I had to fold. At the end of the 2009 symphony season, Helen, 90 years old, had completed 63 years with the Amarillo Symphony. She retired but continued to play church jobs and in a quartet with me until a short time before her death.

Helen was able to command respect by her quiet, still way. I will always see her sweet smile. My life has been enriched and blessed by knowing Helen Gerald. She is deeply missed by her family, friends and students.

Beverly de la Bretonne is a retired Associate Professor of Music at Amarillo College, a position she held for 25 years. At present she is teaching violin part-time in the AC Music Department and carries a full load of students in the AC Suzuki String Program. Beverly was John Kendall's first coordinator of the SUZUKI program, a position that she held from 1969 to 1979. After moving to Amarillo, she became a registered Teacher Trainer in the early 1980s. Since 1972, she has taught in workshops, institutes, and conferences. She met Dr. Suzuki many times and traveled to Japan twice. Beverly holds a BS degree in music education from University of Louisiana-Monroe and a MME degree from Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville, studying Suzuki pedagogy with John Kendall. She has played her violin for 32 years with the Amarillo Symphony.

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